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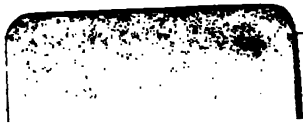
# AMERICA'S WORKING PEOPLE

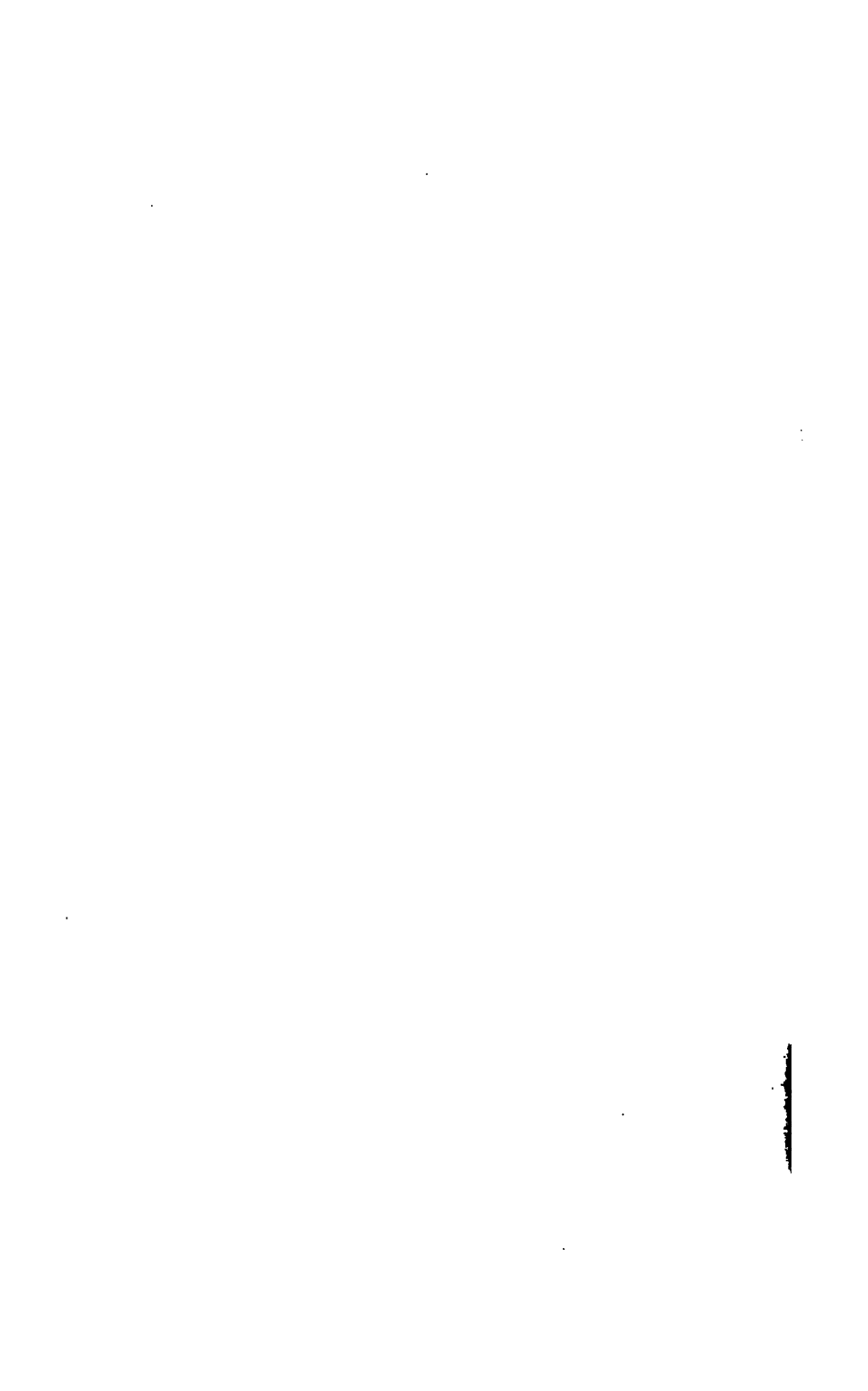
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CHARLES B. SPAHR

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# **AMERICA'S WORKING PEOPLE**



# America's Working People

BY

CHARLES B. SPAHR



LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

91 AND 93 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

LONDON AND BOMBAY

1900

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

SINCE the publication of the first edition the conditions described in Chapter VI have been changed for the better by the successful strike of the anthracite coal miners. The extortionate charge for powder mentioned in the text is now a thing of the past, the companies having agreed henceforward to charge the miners but \$1.50 a keg instead of \$2.75, and the miners having agreed that this reduction shall be reckoned as a part of the ten per cent. advance in wages accorded them. The miners did not secure the desired pledge of biweekly payments, but they have by means of the strike effected an organization through which they may unitedly "demand" biweekly payments, and thus make effective the law which was supposed to require such payments. The securing of an organization embracing all the miners of the anthracite coal-fields—Hungarians, Poles, and Italians, as well as Irish and Americans—is perhaps the most important outcome of the strike. In the early seventies, when the anthracite coal-fields were in the hands of a large number of competing operators, the miners were well paid and relatively independent. With the passing of the bulk of

vi      Preface to the Second Edition

the mines into the hands of the railroads, the condition of the miners grew steadily worse. For twenty-five years their strikes uniformly ended in failure because disorganized labour was no match for combined capital. The present union effected among the men makes less unequal the positions of the two parties. The only disappointing feature of the recent strike is the failure to secure a lowering of the rates at which anthracite coal is carried to the seaboard. These rates remain as before, almost three times as high as those charged for bituminous coal, and the railroad companies, which should have lowered these charges, in order to give the men the ten per cent. advance in wages are likely to shift upon the consumers of coal the entire cost of the concessions made to the men.

C. B. S.

November, 1900.

## PREFACE

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THE chapters of this book were not prepared to establish any thesis, but to ascertain conditions as they are seen by the working people themselves. The impressions received were as far from supporting the belief that nothing need be done to better conditions, as from supporting the belief that nothing can be done. The distinguishing spirit of America's working people is hopeful discontent. Most of them look back upon advances made in the past, and forward to advances to be made in the future. In many quarters—in most quarters in fact—serious losses in money earnings during the last twenty-five years were reported by those who had remained at the same work; but in the factories and the mines, at least, the children of those who had done the unskilled work a generation ago, were generally advancing to higher stations, while new immigrants were taking the vacant places and coming under the quickening influence of American life. In the farming districts the economic losses were not so definitely offset by economic gains, but it was in the farming districts that the writer found social and

moral and intellectual conditions most hopeful. In a previous essay upon "The Distribution of Wealth" in this country, the writer had occasion to point out that the wealth of the rural districts, though widely distributed, is hardly a third as great as the wealth of the cities. In the present volume, which deals with the distribution of well-being in this country, he has occasion to emphasize the fact that the meagre wealth of the rural districts, by reason of its even distribution, brings a higher level of comfort, and culture and character, than is realized in the cities. The ownership of a farm brings to the family of the possessor almost as much of comfort and culture as the ownership of a fortune in the cities, quite as much of independence and mental vigour, and a far greater breadth of sympathy and strength of devotion to American democratic ideals. As compared with other volumes upon America, the present devotes unusual attention to conditions upon farms and in villages; but the writer believes that if he has erred in his perspective, it is by still allowing too great space to the cities, which are wrongly supposed by our foreign critics to represent America. He would recall that our farms and villages contain three-fifths of our whole people, and three-fourths of our people of American parentage. It is here that the immigrants are most thoroughly assimilated, and social institutions most completely dominated by the American spirit.

CHARLES B. SPAHR,

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# AMERICA'S WORKING PEOPLE

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## I

### THE OLD FACTORY TOWNS IN NEW ENGLAND

At the very outset of my investigation I encountered a striking illustration of the peculiar value of workmen's testimony in presenting the side of things which I had not seen in print. I <sup>Workmen's</sup> testimony reached New Bedford, Massachusetts, in the spring of 1898, when the embers of the cotton strike were still smouldering. I thought that I had followed this strike with an eye open to the workmen's side. Yet, shortly before my coming, I had written an article, taking the ground that the strikers had no right to block production in resistance of a ten per cent. cut in wages, when general prices had fallen more than ten per cent., and their old nominal wages were equivalent to an advance. The article had called forth no criticism, and I did not question its accuracy. Yet, in almost the first talk I had with a workman in New Bedford, I was told that



they had accepted one ten per cent. cut in wages without a strike, and that they had "blocked production" only when a second ten per cent. cut had been demanded. From the next workman, and the next, inquiry on the same point brought out the same statement. One workman told me that not only had his wages been reduced more than twenty per cent. per "cut," but that the manufacturers had increased the length of the "cut." The statements about wages were so uniform that they hardly needed corroboration; but the statement about the lengthening of the cut seemed so incredible that for a time I did not think of asking manufacturers whether it was true. But, as I continued to meet weavers, I continued to run across this alleged grievance, and finally, when talking with a brilliant young clergyman in close touch with the manufacturers, I asked him what the latter said about this complaint. By this time I was half prepared for the answer, which was: "They say the cuts haven't been lengthened nearly as much as the men claim." Subsequently I asked a manufacturer about it, and his reply was similar to that quoted by the clergyman, with the explanation, entirely truthful, that so much better yarn and better machinery were now used that the same amount of labour produced more cloth. The price per cut, he said, was not the true test, but the amount that a fair workman could earn in a week. Regarding this he agreed with most of the workmen that men who made ten dollars a week in 1893 generally made but

eight dollars now. In short, the testimony I finally received from moderate men on the two sides was in substantial agreement; but it was the workmen's testimony that was new, and that opened to sight conditions as they are.

The first employer I met began by assuring me that nobody would talk. The town had been made sore, he said, by newspaper misrepresentation; and he proceeded for nearly an hour to explain <sup>The readiness to talk</sup> what the real conditions were. This man represented almost the extreme of "reluctance to talk" among the employing class. Among the employed the case was different only among the recent immigrants. The French Canadians and Germans in the cotton districts were not communicative; the Italians and Huns whom I saw later in the coal districts of Pennsylvania were positively suspicious, and the Chinese on the Pacific coast met you with a blank wall of knownothingism; but American workmen everywhere, except at Homestead, Pennsylvania, and Irish, Scotch, and English workmen quite as much as American (from whom they were almost indistinguishable), met me with entire frankness. It is true that most of them quickly came to believe that I was on their side; and all men tell the truth more freely to their friends than to their opponents. But when this consideration did not enter, I was many times surprised at the candour with which men told me of their own small wages and hard economies, when my questions


had not called for any such personal confessions. The disposition to assume prosperity, which often makes middle-class life such a burdensome fraud, is in a singular degree absent. Like army officers, they know each other's wages; and, unlike army officers, they know that no outside property furnishes hidden resources. Therefore they must live without pretension, and this enforced frankness with each other makes it natural to speak with similar frankness to a stranger whose sympathy they are sure of. Except on railroad cars and about hotels, where misinformation is in perpetual circulation, I had almost no positive misstatements of fact made to me during my entire investigation. I had a good many partial statements of fact made, but these came to me almost exclusively at the beginning of my inquiries. Truth is emphatically a thing which is given "to him that hath." Every man likes to tell at least a plausible story, and the more I knew about any situation the more careful I found my informants to avoid partisan claims. It was largely on this account, I thought, and not at all on account of any superior truthfulness of workmen, that their statements were less likely to need supplementary evidence than those of their employers. The workmen generally knew that I had heard the employers' side, or would hear it shortly. The mere desire, therefore, to tell a story that would be believed kept close to the truth men who would have exaggerated had the field been free,

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The first cotton-mill manager who took me through his mills was charmingly frank. He was interested in a company which had treated the men exceptionally well; and while he took the employers' side regarding the strike, there was no trace of bitterness in his attitude toward the men. This man left no doubt in my mind that his company felt that the reductions in wages had been absolutely forced upon them by the increased production of cottons and the decreased consumption. In the yarn-mills he took me to visit there had been no material reduction of wages and no strike whatever. The way in which wages had kept up in these mills was significant. It is constantly assumed that wages are a fluid mass, and that their level in a few selected establishments indicates their level in all similar establishments throughout the country. Thus the famous Aldrich Report of 1893 assumed that all clerks' wages had risen enormously because a dry-goods store in New Hampshire reported such an increase. As a matter of fact, wages, instead of being fluid, with interconnecting pipes producing the same level all over the country, are more nearly rigid in each separate establishment, and change only with its changing prosperity. But this is a subject to which I must return later. The most interesting theme my escort and I talked of on our way to the outlying district where the mills were located was the change that had taken place in New Bedford when it became a factory centre. The beauty and charm of the older

The visit to the mills

residence portion of the town had taken me by surprise; and when we went down toward the factories, I was again surprised at the number of comfortable homes. When I asked how they had been acquired, I was told that when New Bedford was a whaling port the bright boys who went to sea became captains or mates of small crews before they reached their prime, and that their share of the "catch" on a few successful voyages enabled them to settle down with a competency. In this way the old industry established a strong middle-class American community. The cotton industry, on the other hand, had built up fortunes for a relatively few successful managers, and caused the importation of immigrants to serve as a labouring class. Fortunately for New Bedford, as it seemed to me (though Edward Atkinson and a few other managers preferred the French Canadians), most of her immigrants were from Great Britain, and were therefore easily Americanized; but almost no Americans served as factory hands. As a rule, I think, they had moved upward—or westward, and then upward—though doubtless a few, unable to do other work, had moved downward. The general change in New Bedford, therefore, when it became a cotton instead of a whaling centre, had been toward the separation of classes and the loss of democratic characteristics; but this loss had been accompanied by the enrichment of Americans able to employ the immigrants as their hewers of wood and drawers of water.



When we reached the yarn-mills (and this remark applies to the mills I saw later), I was struck with the sanitary gains which the factory system had brought to the working classes. As compared with the home workrooms which the factories have displaced, conditions seemed almost ideal. It is true that there were rooms in which the air was thick with dust, and others in which it was heavy with the odours of chemicals, and many more where the noises would be sufficient to rack the nerves of people unaccustomed to them. But the dust, so to speak, was clean dust, and the odours, so to speak, were clean odours, and the din of the machinery, which seemed the worst feature of all, was said to act as a sedative rather than an irritant to those who spent their lives in the mills. This last fact does not, of course, mean that the clangour is not a real evil, any more than the inability of city people to sleep when they go into the country indicates that city noises help the nervous system. The dust, the smells, the noises, are all evils; but none of the things to which the human frame must inure itself in cotton-factories sap vitality like the conditions in tenement-house workshops. The safety, the cleanliness, the light, and even the ventilation in all the factories showed that agitation and legislation, supported by the humanity of employers as well as the self-interest of workmen, had raised the sanitary conditions to a higher level in the factories than in the homes of even our modern workmen.

Not less successful has been the long struggle to get rid of child labour. When I went through these mills at New Bedford, I saw only two children who Child labour looked to me less than thirteen. Regarding one of them I expressed my doubts, and my escort answered lightly, "Her certificate says thirteen, and that is all we care for." Evidently, however, public officials, or labour unions, or somebody, did care, or the law would not have been so well enforced. Fifteen years before, I had visited a Massachusetts cotton-factory, and my impression regarding the enforcement of the child-labour law had not been nearly so favourable. The struggle for the law had been a hard one, because not only capitalism but sentimentalism had been arrayed against it. The sentimentalists who took the side of the capitalists claimed that their concern was for the interests of the very poor. Without doubt a large part of the very poor—including all of the degraded poor—were glad to keep their little children in factories. But all workmen wished that other workmen would keep their children out of the factories, and the disinterested public finally demanded that all must cooperate for the good of all. It was a long and hard struggle between private interests on the one side and public interests on the other, between material interests on the one side and moral interests on the other; but in the end the side of public interests and moral interests triumphed completely. In Massachusetts to-day I heard no manufacturers even hint at a desire for the

Southern privilege of employing little children. In fact, I found no real desire for the Southern privilege of lengthening hours—the alleged demand therefor being sanctioned chiefly as a means of defeating a further shortening of hours. Practically the whole State accepts the principle that the hours of labour should be such as would make men stronger instead of weaker; and absolutely the whole State accepts the principle that childhood should be preserved sacredly for the playground, the schoolroom, and the home.

My first impression about work in the mills was that it was unexpectedly easy. I do not mean that it seemed as light as the work of editors, but compared with other manual labourers the <sup>Old men</sup> cotton operatives in most of the rooms seemed to have a good deal of leisure. This apparent leisure, however, my escort told me, was due to the fact that both the machines and the operatives were working well. If either were working badly, the operatives would be hurrying to and fro, while the machines would frequently be stopped. The young women and men who seemed so much at leisure were really keeping close watch not to let a break get started anywhere, and this work required a greater strain than it seemed. This fact I soon had impressed upon me in a way not to be questioned or forgotten. When I had gone through room after room, everywhere watching faces (because the machinery was past my comprehension), I was finally forced to remark that I hadn't seen any old men.



"Come to think of it," was my escort's reply, "I don't believe I have either." As we went on, both of us looked for old men, but only saw them at long intervals, and then at such work as sweeping, or the like. By "old men" I mean men over forty-five, or what should be the prime of life. "Why do the men drop out so young?" I asked. "That's a question," was the reply, "for which Ross [the head of the Spinners' Union] will probably have a readier answer than I have." When I met Ross, I found the answer was ready and specific. The strain of the work wore men out before they were forty-five, and their fingers were no longer nimble enough to keep up with work demanded.

As regards sanitary conditions, hours for labour, and non-employment of young children, the first factory I visited was fairly typical. There was, however, one feature connected with it which I did not see duplicated, and that was an almost beautiful village of homes for the employees. When the mill had been built, it was so far out of the city that the owners found it necessary to construct homes for their operatives. With rare skill and taste they covered a tract of land with houses which any self-respecting family might be glad to occupy. On the architectural side these houses were better than most middle-class families occupy, and they were altogether free from the depressing monotony usual in factory houses. I heard about them from other manufacturers,

A model  
village

## Factory Towns in New England 11

who rather scouted the outlay upon refinements which operatives would not appreciate. Two persons told me exactly the same story about one family of tenants using their bath-tub for pickling a pig, and another using it as a receptacle for ashes. When I visited the village, however, and asked my escort about this story, he said that he had often heard it from the outside, but had never heard the slightest confirmation of it from any one about the mills. Probably at the beginning some one said that the tenants would use the bath-tub for these purposes, and the story had kept floating around for years that the tenants had actually so used them. I was told, however, that the houses had not been a profitable investment. When taxes, repairs, etc., were paid, the net profits were only in the neighbourhood of four per cent. The company was unable to get a rent proportionate to the number of rooms and the general excellence of the construction. Every one knows that in our country villages houses that cost a thousand dollars will rent for ten dollars a month, and houses that cost five thousand will often rent for little more, because there is no demand for them from the renting class in such villages. In the same way, the renting class among factory operatives cannot afford to go above seven or eight dollars a month, no matter what the cost or excellence of the house provided. If these houses had had one or two rooms less, the investment would have been a profitable one. Even as it was, it had yielded, incidentally, a

profit to the mills, by enabling them to get and keep the pick of the hands in New Bedford. I afterwards learned, from another source, that factory hands of the best type were always glad to get work at the Howland mills.

Some of the factory tenements which I visited later in New Bedford were of an entirely different order,

and, in a fitting way, were occupied by the poorest grade of employees instead of the best. Indeed, factory tenements were almost

always under the ban. The best workmen decidedly preferred not to live in them. This preference influenced rents, which I found to be surprisingly lower in company houses than in houses owned by private landlords. Both from the workmen and employers I asked for the reason for this difference. The employers in some cases said that it was their policy to keep rents down. The employees all said that the houses owned by individual landlords were so much better looked after and were occupied by so much better class of tenants that those who could afford to pay the rents were always glad to do so. One reason, they said, why a better class of tenants were in private houses was because workmen hated to be perpetually under the control of their employers. If they had a private landlord, they felt some independence as to whether they worked or stopped working; but if they lived in company houses and their families could be evicted if they stopped work, they felt that a large measure of independence was lost.

Preference  
for private  
landlords



In New Bedford I saw nothing to indicate that the employers put any pressure upon their employees to live in the company houses; but in one or two of the factory villages I visited later there was believed to be pressure of this sort.

Where company houses are preferred

At Dodgeville and Hebron, for example, people told me that whenever work was scant, the employees who lived in their own houses or rented from private landlords were the first to be dropped from the rolls. I received no direct confirmation of this from employers, but it seemed to be true. At all events, the employees were so thoroughly convinced of its truth that they had no disposition to get homes of their own, and thus the greatest incentive to thrift was removed. A few of them, however, had saved money enough to own houses in neighbouring towns; and a good many had savings-bank accounts. But, even on the merely economic side, the possession of money in savings-banks, and the ownership of houses to be rented to others, do not compare in profitableness with the ownership of the home in which one lives. The landlord for some one else has not only the losses due to vacancies and the difficulties of collection, but also those due to the making of repairs, of which the first tenant takes no care and for which the next tenant cares nothing. The man who owns his own home is always sure of a tenant, always sure of collections, and generally sure to take care of the property. On the side of citizenship the gains that come from home

ownership instead of tenancy are still greater. In the village of Dodgeville—the most depressing I visited—I saw no evidence of extortion on the part of the company. The rents were a dollar a month for each room, and while four dollars a month for a tenement paid a good interest on the capital, there was nothing extortionate about it. The depressing feature of the town was the lack of independence among the workmen occupying the houses. That these workmen, with only one company to work for and only one company to rent from, should have felt, as they did, that they were not free to join trades-unions, seemed an inevitable result.

I did, however, it should be said, visit another town (Lonsdale, Rhode Island) largely under the control of a single company (the Goddards), where I  
Fences heard no complaint of discrimination against operatives who did not live in the company houses, and where the men felt perfectly free to belong to trades-unions if they so desired. The personal element, therefore, is a modifying factor of prime importance. The Goddards could have established a petty despotism had they chosen, but they had preferred to establish a free town. My visit to Lonsdale was a short one, and the few working people with whom I talked may not have been typical, but the town seemed to me to illustrate how much good a liberal management could secure. Here, again, as at the first mills I visited in New Bedford, the company houses were

often such as no self-respecting family need complain of. I heard, indeed—and there were signs of its truth—that the houses had been comparatively neglected of recent years, and that the town was formerly much prettier; but some of the little homes were still decidedly attractive. Particularly was this the case of the houses whose yards were fenced in. I had once had some sympathy with the crusade, “Down with the fences,” but my observations of New England factory towns made me ready to urge a crusade, “Up with the fences.” On the residence streets in great cities the open lawn is the more beautiful; but among factory people, where the houses are of necessity close together, the removal of the fence signifies the loss of a garden, the abandonment of all effort after flowers, and gradually the disappearance of the grass. In fact, it means utter desolation, and is apt to signify that the home has lost all the charm and much of the privacy which the word home should always carry with it.

One of the limitations upon such an investigation as I was undertaking was the relative difficulty of seeing the homes of the poorer class. No French Canadians ever suggested my going into their homes. The homes I saw were apt to be those of the more intelligent men with whom I wished to talk about industrial conditions. There was, however, one evening when a weaver took me about New Bedford to show me the seamy side of factory life, and I looked into several sorry-looking dwellings, and

A factory  
boarding-  
house

spent a most interesting hour in a factory boarding-house. In the latter place, some of the men who were gathered in the loafing-room were good talkers and probably good workmen. One or two of the group were already—it was just after supper—fuddled with drink, and my escort told me that the brighter men who showed no signs of drinking would not have been in this boarding-house unless they were, from some cause, black sheep. When I entered the room, the most intoxicated of the men greeted me most heartily, put his hand into his pocket, and began to pull out some money. When I told him that I was not looking for his money, he said that he had taken me for one of the officers of the union going around to collect dues, and we soon launched off into a discussion of the union and its demands. These men were practically a unit as regards the amount to which their wages had been cut; but as regards the demand of the weavers that the employers should abandon the fining system, the brightest workman stood decidedly with the employers. He was not fined, he said, once in six months, and he believed the fining system was necessary to keep men from botching their jobs.

As an abode, this place was hardly more worthy of the name boarding-house than the ordinary boarding-house is worthy of the name home. But  
Living well  
on eight  
dollars a  
week wretched lodgings of this sort were the exception. My surprise, when I visited most of the homes, was not at the squalor in which the opera-

tives lived upon their pitifully small wages, but the neatness, self-respect, and even comfort which appeared nearly everywhere. Particularly was this true in the homes to which I was taken by the son of a Primitive Methodist minister. The families he took me to see were, of course, the church people in his father's parish. Nearly all of them were English families, and, being Methodists, they were families in which drink was regarded as the public enemy. If I had not known the wages that these people got, I should have assumed that weavers made fifteen dollars a week or more, instead of seven or eight. Usually there were but four rooms, but the one room with a stove, which was living-room, dining-room, and kitchen combined, was as neat as similar rooms have always been in the best American farm-houses.

One of the most interesting talks I had in New Bedford was with the Primitive Methodist pastor and his wife. When I had met them, and afterwards had met some of their church members, I could understand how it came about that so many—if not most—of the labour members of the British Parliament had gotten their training for public life, moral and intellectual, in the Primitive Methodist Church. This Church, like all Methodist churches, calls upon its membership for active participation in church work, and, unlike many Methodist churches, is still thoroughly in sympathy with the aspirations of the poor. A little later I met a brilliant minister, naturally radical and naturally in



sympathy with the labour movement, who spoke of the twenty per cent. cut in the factory people's wages as if it were almost a matter of unconcern. The Primitive Methodist minister and his wife, whose income for a month was less than the other pastor's income for a week, felt so keenly the cut in the wages of their parishioners that they could fairly be said to have suffered with them. Their income, though better than that of any of their parishioners, was still so small that they could both see and feel what a loss of one-fifth in wages meant in the workmen's families. They knew their parishioners, not by occasional visits to a mission church, but by working with them and living with them. Therefore, by reason of their poverty, they felt the spirit of brotherhood which the more brilliant man, living among the rich, was unable to comprehend.

To them brotherhood was not a creed but a feeling. Some of the pictures which this pastor's wife gave of the home lives of their people were as full of beauty and love as anything that Millet has painted. That which to me seemed hardest of all—the fact that wives as well as husbands went into the factory at daybreak, and remained till nightfall—had not, she said, destroyed home life. No husbands and wives she knew lived more lovingly and happily than some who rose together long before five o'clock, and worked together in getting ready the breakfast, or perhaps doing the week's washing, and at night, when they returned, joined in the

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## Factory Towns in New England 19

same household tasks. The outward union of their lives seemed to make closer the union of their hearts. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth," and, whatever the hardness of condition, love and faith can use them for the building up of finer characters.

But such triumphs of character over environment did not make better the environment. Owing, perhaps, to the fact that men's fingers are less nimble than women's, or owing, perhaps, to moral deficiencies, men drop out of the factories at an earlier age than women. There were many families where the women did the factory work and the men took care of the household. Each sex was taken out of its natural sphere, and, however well the women may have done the men's work, I could not help believing that the men did the women's work badly. It is a serious loss to a man when he is reduced to the "toting" of meals to those of his family who are at work, and it is a serious loss to a woman when she is kept all the day from those of her family who are at home. Where there were little babies in the family, it seemed to me that the evil of mothers working in the factories was so great as to demand a legislative remedy. Many of the mothers who worked all the week in the factories for six or seven dollars were paying from two to three dollars to some one else to look after their little ones. The mother may be able to look after the looms while she knows that a babe is crying

Households  
upside  
down

for her at home, but the babe cannot make up the loss—and the thing is wrong. Every consideration which demanded that children should not be sacrificed through their employment in the mills demands that babes shall not be sacrificed through the employment of nursing mothers. The law, like those prohibiting child labour, must not proceed faster than labour sentiment will support it, but whenever employment of young mothers is obviously an evil, it should be suppressed by law, and not left to the individual cupidity of husbands already too willing to add to their own comforts at the expense of their wives. Each workman should be required to do his part in what all agree that the good of their class demands. This legislative work, however, can only bring up the rear. The advance work in introducing a better social order must be the awakening of a better and more American sentiment among the working people. In fact, the sentiment against woman labour in the factory and in the field has always been so much stronger in America than in Europe that I could not help believing that the appalling number of wives and mothers in these factories was due to the displacement of American labour by British a generation ago, and the present displacing of British labour by French Canadian and Portuguese. In case these races shall in time be followed by West Indians and Malays, the process of introducing American standards of living will indeed be a long one; but such standards must be introduced

if our political democracy is to continue to have a social democracy at its base.

At present the process of Americanizing is going forward almost as rapidly as the foreign elements are being introduced. Two of the most interesting talks I had were with French Catholic priests—one in New Bedford and one near Dodgeville. <sup>The Americanizing process</sup> Both of these men were in sympathy with American ideas—the one near Dodgeville, for instance, strongly indorsing the local-option ordinance which kept his parish free from tippling and loafing places; and the one at New Bedford strongly indorsing the trades-union movement, to which he attributed the great shortening of hours since he came to this country twenty-five years ago. But what these men said of their own views was less important than what they said about their people. Both agreed that when French Canadians had lived in this country six or eight years they were never again contented to live in French Canada. The old New Bedford priest told me that he had known family after family to go back to the province of Quebec and perhaps purchase or pay the mortgage on the old farm, expecting to remain there the rest of their days. But first one or two of the young people would find their way back to this country, and finally the old people would come and settle where all their children were. For the poorer classes America is still the land of opportunity, and their hearts cannot be alienated.

During the first years they were in this country, said the old French priest, his people were not likely to connect themselves with any of the trades-unions, but when they had gone back to Canada and returned again, they were almost certain to join the organizations to which the workmen of other nationalities belonged. These organizations, however, are almost entirely in the hands of the English and Irish. I spent a good deal of time talking with the leaders, generally at the union rooms, and I saw almost as many Scotchmen as French Canadians, though the number of Scotch operatives is relatively insignificant. Indeed, it is the disposition of the English-speaking workmen to form trades-unions that leads some employers to express a decided preference for French Canadian labour. The two leaders whom I saw most of, Ross, of the spinners, and Hart, of the weavers, were English and Irish respectively. I was interested to meet these two men, because I had heard the former so highly praised, and the latter so bitterly condemned, by one or two employers. I found that each had the confidence of his union about as much as the other, and that each appeared to deserve it about as much. Ross was a suave, tactful little man, who already represented New Bedford in the legislature, and would probably in a few years be entirely outside of the ranks of labour. Hart was a vehement man, who felt strongly the sufferings of his class, and expected always to be identified with it. The former

would be much the better negotiator, while no agitator at all; the latter would be much the better agitator, while no negotiator at all. These two types everywhere dominate trades-unions. Unfortunately, it is the latter type which generally prepares the statement of grievances given to the public in time of conflict, when only strong words express the feelings of the rank and file in the unions. For upper-class consumption these strong words are worse than worthless, since expressions of emotion for which an audience is unprepared arouse aversion instead of sympathy. But the strong feeling which is expressed is the real basis of the labour movement, and the mere business negotiators like Ross could never do the pioneer work of building up unions to a point where membership brings gain instead of self-sacrifice.

My talk with these men was chiefly of the strike—now a thing of the past—and of the wage-cuts and the fining system, which still in some degree remain sources of discontent. The statements <sup>The cut in wages</sup> about wages have already been outlined. The reductions during this decade had been about twenty per cent., and the reductions during the last twenty-five years had been nearly one half. When I asked a clear-headed young manufacturer about the reductions during the longer period, his figures made it about forty per cent. Weavers in 1873 or thereabouts, he said, made fifty to sixty dollars a month, where they now make thirty to thirty-five dollars. Yet this manu-

facturer, who so clearly recognised the fall in money wages, corresponding to the fall in prices, in the field of his personal observation, believed that official statistics showed a rise of wages in other industries. When I began to write this article, I was interested to see what the last census said about wages in Massachusetts cotton-factories. I knew before that this census exaggerated wages, but I was a little taken aback when I found the statement that between 1880 and 1890 average wages in these factories had advanced over thirty per cent. On reference to the admirable articles on factory life at Fall River published in the *American Wool and Cotton Reporter* last July, I found that the fall in wages in the last twenty years was there estimated at fifty per cent. The statements made to the investigator for this manufacturers' journal were in entire accord with the statements made to me, or pictured even greater losses. As between the first-hand testimony of men who have spent their lives in making cotton, and the official statistics of a partisan census, there was no question which to trust.

The manufacturer who talked with me about the fall in wages during the last twenty-five years said that he was sure that prices had fallen even more, and that the working people had more pleasures and more comforts than when he was a boy. This seemed possible. It was certainly true if the city pleasures and comforts of which he spoke had more value than the village pleasures and comforts which are

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made more difficult by advancing population and advancing rents. Provisions and clothing and amusements had certainly fallen somewhat more than wages. The serious losses to the working people from the wage-cuts had not come in the lessened value of their wages when they had work, but in the prolonged losses of work before these cuts were made and accepted. On the farms, where men employ themselves, no one stops work when prices fall; but in the cities, where most men are wage-earners, work slackens when prices fall. Nothing is more difficult than reducing wages, and both manufacturers and men prefer to run the mills part time at old wages rather than make or take a cut. This restriction of production keeps up the prices of manufactured goods, but the keeping up of prices lessens consumption and thus increases the number of the unemployed. The terrible ordeals of suffering through which New Bedford and Fall River have gone have been due to the hopeless struggles to keep prices on an artificially high level, by agreements between employers and employed to slacken work, or by disagreements which stopped it altogether. The sufferings of the farmers caused by their enforced acceptance of falling prices have not been greater than the sufferings of city labourers caused by their attempts to avert falling prices. The problem of the unemployed in the cities and the problem of falling prices in the rural districts are one and the same problem.

The other evil of which the men complained, besides



the repeated cuts in wages and lack of employment, was the system of fining the weavers for defective work.

**The fining system** Some of the weavers told me that for a flaw which did not affect the selling price of a single yard of the goods they were often docked their pay for the entire piece. They were willing to accept discharge if they did not do fair work, but they regarded the fining system as oppressive. To the complaint about excessive fines the manufacturers' answer was clear and explicit. While the weavers were docked their entire pay upon a seriously defective piece, the weavers' pay was only a small part of the cost of the goods, and careless weaving impaired the entire value. As to the suggested remedy of the weavers' union, they said that they could not discharge hands whenever discipline was needed. Discipline, however, was all that they desired, as the total revenue from fines was a mere bagatelle. So strongly did the employers put this point—with which some of the weavers concurred—yet so strongly did other weavers urge that harsh foremen defrauded them by excessive fines, that I could not help recurring to the Consumers' League's remedy for the abuses of the fining system in stores. Let the fines go to some fund for the employees. All incentive to injustice is thus removed, and the fines become a part of the wages of the better workmen. The interests of employers and employed are no longer in conflict, and both share in the gains which better work and greater harmony bring.

A chapter on Massachusetts factory towns should not close without a word about the schools in which the factory children are educated. These formed the one altogether bright feature of my investigation. If I had not long before been converted to a belief in compulsory education, this visit would have converted me. The children of the French Canadians, I found, remained in school until thirty weeks after they were thirteen years old, and then were withdrawn to be placed in the factories. The law alone prevented the selfishness of parents from sacrificing the future of their children and of their class. The schools, too, were uniformly of a high grade. As I have said, the most depressing towns I saw were Dodgeville and Hebron. But, as I was coming through the latter, I visited the school, and found it as good as those of New Bedford, and better than those of New York City. The work for the little children was enlivened by kindergarten methods, the work for the older children was enlivened by reading the best of interesting literature, and all the rooms were made attractive by pictures. The collection of Perry pictures, which the principal showed me, cost but a cent apiece, and yet reproduced exquisitely for the children the best things in art. Schools like these, supplemented by public libraries like those of Massachusetts, put every child where he can forge ahead for himself in almost any post-graduate course he may select. The growth of a labouring caste is impossible. When I came away

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from the district and thought of the immense strides forward which the immigrants, and, still more, the children of the immigrants, were making, it seemed to me as if the loss which immigration was causing was in some degree counterbalanced by the gain. Indeed, I should say that the gain completely offsets the loss did not I know that whatever impairs democracy here retards democracy all over the world. For the world's sake as well as for our own we cannot afford to have the quality of our citizenship lowered. But the quality of our citizenship is not lowered by immigration with anything like the rapidity which the sight of the new arrivals would seem to promise. The ideals, the opportunities, the responsibilities of our democracy change the immigrants into a new order of men. Whatever the Old World may say about the superiority of administration secured by its method of class rule, the advantage is not to be compared with the superiority of common manhood secured by the American method of mass rule. The power of our democracy to transform hands into men awakens new faith in American institutions.

## II

### THE NEW FACTORY TOWNS IN THE SOUTH

WHEN I was in Massachusetts, I heard absolutely nothing about English competition. More than half the manufacturers I talked with had a good deal to say about the competition of "cheap labour," but it was always the cheap labour of the South. The one manufacturer who did talk with me about English labour put in the strongest kind of terms its inferiority. "An American weaver," he said, "can handle eight looms, where an English weaver handles four." I told him that some Scotch and English weavers I had talked with had said that there was just that difference between the work they did in the old country and here, and I asked how he accounted for it. "The English workman is too beer-soaked," he said, "to look after more than four looms." The sentiment here, he continued, is against drinking, and those who come over learn to meet our expectations. I doubted whether this was the whole explanation, and thought of the brilliant passage in Henry Adams's History of the United States where he says that in the earliest days of the Republic it was a

constant miracle to our foreign critics how the newly landed immigrant was changed into a new man by the hopes and ambitions which this country awakened in him. Be the explanation what it may, there is no doubt about the facts. American weavers turn out nearly twice as much work per day as their English competitors, and their wage per piece is absolutely a little less. It is not strange, therefore, that the New England manufacturers, who are shipping large quantities of cotton abroad, have ceased to talk of the cheap labour of old England.

The cheap labour they do talk about, as has been said, is the cheap labour of the South. No one who talked with me, however, talked the nonsense I had seen in print. No one attempted to convince me that the Southern manufacturers get their labour for half the New England price because the weekly wages are forty per cent. lower and the hours twenty per cent. longer. In fact, it so happened that the first two manufacturers I talked with did not believe that the Southern manufacturers had any advantage whatever over the Northern. One of them pointed out to me that wages in the Southern city of Atlanta were higher than in the Northern city of Fall River, and the other said that if he were to build another mill he would locate it in New England rather than in the South. These two manufacturers, however, proved to be exceptions. Everybody admitted that the Southern labour was less efficient, but there

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was a general conviction that wages in the South were less per piece as well as per hour. On this point I tried in vain to get fair statistics. I found that wages in Massachusetts were less per spindle than in the South, and at first I was inclined to agree with the manufacturers who thought that Southern labour was the dearer. But when I came to visit a cotton-mill in the South, I found that the cotton thread used was so much coarser that the spindles had to be renewed much oftener. A Southern manager, who had had previous experience in New England, told me that the weaver who looked after eight looms at the North could not run more than six in most mills at the South. It was clear, therefore, that the statistics giving the wage per spindle were as unfair to the North as those giving the wage per hour were to the South. The nearest I came to a fair comparison between wages North and South was in a talk with a manufacturer who had mills making a similar grade of cloth in both sections. He had found the previous year that wages in the Northern mills had cost him one-third more per piece than in the Southern; but his Northern mills were old, while his Southern mill was new, and had much the better machinery. Had there been the same machinery in both places, he said, the difference would not have been more than ten or fifteen per cent. The recent cut of ten per cent. in wages at the North, therefore, seemed to produce substantial equality. There might still be a slight difference in favour of the Northern

employee, but the difference was slight indeed. As a Southern manufacturer afterwards said to me, the difference between the two sections had been ridiculously exaggerated. "There seem," he said, "to be two classes at the North. There is one set of men, like ———, who have always told us that we couldn't manufacture at the South and still hold on to their predictions; and then there is another set, who, for some reason—trying to beat down wages, I guess—have been making out of late that they can't manufacture at the North to compete with us. We can manufacture at the South, and we are doing it; but it requires good management here, just as it does anywhere else. The men who manage badly go to the wall here, just as they do elsewhere." This was the fairest summary of the situation that I heard. Employers at the South may receive a somewhat larger share of the product than employers at the North, just as employers at the North receive a somewhat larger share than employers in England; but, in the main, labour at the South, at the North, and in England is paid pretty nearly the same proportion of the value of its product. Everywhere employers and employed together get the whole product, and everywhere they divide it on pretty much the same basis. The employer who counts on getting rich at the South from the supposed underpayment of labour there, and not from the same attention to business that would make him prosper at the North, is likely to end in bankruptcy.

The first cotton-factory town I visited in the South was Lindale, Georgia. It is a little town on the Tennessee border, about ten miles from Rome, and has been built up out of nothing An American community by the factory which a Northern firm has planted there. I reached the place a little after six in the evening, and was advised by the ticket agent to stop at a boarding-place kept by a foreman in the mills. It turned out to be an attractive place. Neither the foreman nor his wife was at home when I arrived, but a daughter of fourteen, with a bright, pretty face, made ready a room for me and had supper well under way before her mother returned. There was no servant—it was a white district—and this young girl, the oldest of six children, took charge of things with the quiet self-possession of a young woman at the North many years her senior. When her father returned from the mills, well on toward eight o'clock, supper was served, and I learned that waffles were almost as good when brought on the table all together at the beginning of the meal as when brought in at intervals direct from the oven. There were three other boarders, and all of them were persons of some education. The foreman himself turned out to be a former subscriber to my own newspaper, *The Outlook*. He had dropped it, he said, partly on account of its theology and partly on account of its politics. He was deeply interested in both of these subjects, and in music as well. Indeed, the whole town was interested in music, if we



could judge from the amount we heard for an hour after supper. My host laughingly said: "There is more bad playing in this town than in any other place of its size in the country." He was more than half right about the quality as well as the quantity; but the impression made on me by the musical ambition of the village was decidedly a pleasant one. This impression was deepened when my host began to speak of religious conditions. There were nearly as many church members in the town as there were families, and all of them—Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and even Primitive Baptists—worshipped in the same church. The Primitive or "hard-shell" Baptist blacksmith was one of the most respected men in the community. To a considerable extent, this religious co-operation was due to the terms upon which the head of the manufacturing company had built the meeting-house. The plan was that the different denominations should supply the pulpit by turns. Although this plan could not be carried out upon precisely equal terms for all, it worked well, because in rural communities in the South different denominations have learned to co-operate—sometimes taking turns as to which church shall hold the "protracted meetings."

On the side of social morality, this town and the other white towns I visited in the South stood high.

**Social  
morality**      The people were all Americans, and the women had, along with American freedom, American self-respect. It is true that they dipped

snuff, if that be considered a matter of morality; and it is also true that the early marriages seemed to be followed rather frequently by separations. But, so far as social purity went, the standard was high, and this showed itself not only in the absence of illegitimate births, but still more certainly in the absence of scandals and obscenity in the conversation of the young men sitting on boxes around the stores, or even loafing in front of the hotels. It was a clean atmosphere—a Southern country store seeming to me an infinitely wholesomer place than a Northern city saloon or club. This praise of the South, however, does not apply to the Black Belt, for in the South as well as in the North the presence of a lower social caste is perilous to morality. The greatest social purity is everywhere in homogeneous communities, where no class looks up or down, and none can be indifferent to the terrible consequences of immorality because its own young women are rarely the direct sufferers. This thought had also been impressed upon me in the factory towns of the North. In New Bedford and Taunton I had been struck with the uniform testimony respecting the morality of factory girls. The worst cynic I met was not cynical on this point. The social immorality that existed, I was told, came almost exclusively from servants in families and hotels, clerks in stores, and other young women with meagre incomes in constant contact with people of a higher social grade, whose luxury they envied but could not afford. The young

women who worked all day in the factories, living as well as their associates, and holding their heads as high as any of them, rarely forfeited their self-respect for any cause, and never for money. The credit for this high morality among the factory girls of New England was often given to the influence of the Catholic Church. There is no doubt as to the power or quality of this influence—which helps make the Irish everywhere pre-eminent for social virtue—but the same kind of morality among the factory women in the South, and the greater refinement among the men, made me feel that American Protestantism is as strong a force for purity as even Irish Catholicism, and that the relative purity of social life in the factories is chiefly due to the social equality among the workers.

The first morning I was in Lindale, I went, of course, to visit the factory. The superintendent received me courteously, and, when he had read my letter of introduction, asked me to go through the mill at my leisure, and return for a talk with him when his immediate pressure of business was over. Going through the mill in this way made it natural for me to talk with the hands, and I found them working more cheerfully than is the rule at the North. “It is not doing well that makes people happy, but doing better”; and these workmen, though not doing so well in point of wages as workmen in the North, were doing better than they had done on their farms a few years before. In fact, one of them in the

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the South

engine-room was receiving as high wages as a similar workman would receive in the North; and the loom-fixers, I afterwards learned from the superintendent, received actually higher wages than those at the North. Mechanical skill is still so scarce at the South that it must often be imported, and where this is necessary, wages must be graded accordingly. Men who had been in the mills for several years told me that wages were not so high as they used to be, but that there had been no recent cuts like those at the North or those which the neighbouring cotton-farmers and their hands had suffered. The result of all this was a general atmosphere of cheerfulness; and this, to my surprise, characterized the rooms where the smallest children were at work. I knew before that children of nine and ten worked in these mills for eleven hours a day, and I expected that the sight of them at work would quicken my rebellion against the system which robbed them of their childhood. But they went about their work with so much spring, and seemed to have so much spirit in it all and after it all, that I was completely nonplussed. I talked with two or three of the youngest, and found them proud of their work, and disposed, I thought, to exaggerate their wages. It was all so far from being the conscious slavery I had expected that when I saw the superintendent I expressed my surprise. He I found did not regard the child labour so lightly as the children regarded it. Only the stress of competition and the anxiety of parents to have

the children at work made him permit their employment. He was a Northern man, and I feared at first that this was peculiarly the Northern view. But a week or so later, when I had a long talk with the Southern superintendent of one of the cotton-mills at Concord, North Carolina, I found his sentiments the same. "Sometimes," he said, "when a father comes to me and says that he needs Jennie's help now, I put him off, and try to keep Jennie in school. But in a few weeks the father will be at me again, and say that he has the offer of work somewhere else. 'Any better pay than here?' I will ask. 'Oh, no,' he will answer, 'but they have work for Jennie too.'" "That's the way it goes," he continued. "We simply have to put the little tots at work, or we will lose our hands to somebody else." "In that case," I naturally observed, "it would be a good thing to have the State law forbid the employment of children under a proper age." "The trouble with that," he replied, "is that it would set a precedent of State interference, and enable a lot of demagogues to go about saying how much they had done for the working people."

Along with the early employment of children goes the early retirement of adults. "We have few men in the mills," said the superintendent at Lindale, "over thirty-five years old." He suggested that early marriages had much to do with it. The people marry young, and when they get to middle life they expect their children to support them. What-


Adult  
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ever the explanation, the fact confronts you everywhere. It had been the saddest feature of cotton-mill life at the North, and at the South it was still more impressive. The children were at work, and men were idle. One day, when I was sitting in front of one of the stores at Boozeville—a badly named temperance settlement just beyond the boundaries of Lindale—a blind guitar-player came along and struck up the tune "On the Bowery." Within two minutes, at the outside, there were thirteen able-bodied men gathered about, or almost as many men as there were houses in the place. In the size of its leisure class—among men—Boozeville outranked Tuxedo.

There was, however, one respect in which the conditions about this Lindale factory were much better than at the North. The married women, when they became mothers, left the factory. <sup>Married women at home</sup> "If my wife has to go into the factory," said one young operative to me, "we shall go back to the farm." This was the general sentiment. Most of these men were from the farms, and many of them expected to return when they had money enough to pay off a mortgage or buy needed stock and implements. As farmers they had always been accustomed to seeing little children at work out-of-doors, and felt no protest against seeing them at work indoors. They had been in school but little themselves, and felt little protest against keeping their children out of school. But, unlike the immigrant factory operatives in the

North, they had always been accustomed to seeing their own mothers work exclusively in the homes, and they rebelled at the thought of the mothers of their children doing anything else. This wholesome sentiment bids fair to persevere, while the lack of sentiment against child labour is likely to disappear when the Southern factory labour becomes organized, and when the rapid development of the public-school system, which everywhere has followed the overthrow of the aristocratic régime, produces educated workmen who will demand a schooling for their children. The blight of slavery put the South two generations behind the North, both industrially and educationally, but the character and present progress of the Southern whites makes the prospect of betterment much greater at the South than at the North.

Already at Lindale the schools were kept open and free for six months every year. In this town, however, the sixth month of school was due to the Large families liberality of the factory management, which furnished the school building and contributed something like \$100 a year to the running expenses. The general provision of the law, I was told by a school-teacher in a neighbouring district, was a payment of four cents a day for each pupil. Thus fifty pupils made possible a teacher's salary of \$10 a week. At Lindale the number of pupils was astonishingly large. There were two good-sized schoolrooms, so well filled that I was not surprised when the principal told me



that the total receipts of the school amounted to \$900 a year for the six months' period. This meant that both teachers were paid what were considered exceptionally fine salaries. I had recently visited the larger and better-to-do town of Fryeburg, Maine, where two rooms with a handful of children in each made up the entire public-school system. In Lindale the size of the town promised a smaller school, and also the number of children who went early into the factories. Yet here there were more than twice as many pupils as in the New England village. The full explanation of it all did not at once occur to me, but my hostess happened to explain it in a conversation soon after. The conversation was upon the size of Southern families, and I ventured the remark that five or six children seemed to be the rule. "Here in Lindale," she said, "seven or eight would be nearer it." "You don't mean," I said, "that families are larger here than elsewhere, do you?" "Oh, yes," she replied; "when they engage hands to come to the mill, they, of course, prefer families with a large number of children." Where a factory company is the landlord, the usual landlord's rule regarding children is reversed.

But the essential feature of the situation was the fact that the Southern families in all the rural districts and not merely in mill villages resemble in every way the New England families of two or three <sup>Early marriages</sup> generations ago. Early marriages, as every one knows, are the rule. This was strikingly brought home to me




at a meeting I attended of the local literary society. It was held at a farmhouse near the town, and the star pieces on the programme were essays by the son of the host and by the young-woman assistant at the school. The young man's essay was entitled "Why I am Single," and it was an extremely humorous account of the assistance he had received in remaining single from one girl after another, to whom he had made highly varied and interesting proposals. The paper was deservedly a great hit. When the young woman followed, her subject proved to be almost identical. It was entitled "The Tribulations of an Old Maid," and recounted her unintentional discouragement of her first suitor, the failure of any successor to appear, and the sad meditations which single blessedness had evoked. This paper did not add so much to the merriment of the company, and when the school principal spoke to me afterwards about it, his comment was: "I tell you, it is a little embarrassing when a young woman over twenty talks about old maids!"

My talk with the superintendent at the Lindale mills was largely of the relative advantages of manufacturing North and South. The matter of wages, of Southern advantages which so much has been said of late, was far from being the only point of importance. In fact, the first advantage for Lindale that came up in our conversation was the cheapness of fuel. This superintendent was paying \$1.50 a ton, while the Massachusetts price was about \$5. When I asked how the

bituminous coal he was using compared with anthracite for steam-making purposes, he replied, "It is twelve per cent. better." (This estimate I have since verified in several quarters.) When I asked whether the saving in the matter of fuel would amount to as much a year in an ordinary mill as the cost of superintendence, he figured a moment and replied, "Yes, it would be liberal pay for superintendence." Here at once, then, was a gain equivalent to five per cent. of the wage bill. Still another important matter was the cost of cotton. This he bought direct from the cotton plantations, saving thirty cents a bale by not needing to have it compressed for shipment, and \$2 a bale more in the matter of freights. This saving, he said, would be unimportant in a mill working fine goods, but in a mill making coarse goods like that at Lindale, \$2.30 a bale, or half a cent a pound, meant a good many thousand dollars a year. When talking with my superintendent at Concord, North Carolina, I found that neither of these advantages counted so heavily in his favour. He was paying, he said, seventy cents a ton for his coal at the mines, but \$3 a ton for its freight to Concord. Railroad freights, he said, had not been reduced in years, except on fertilizers and farm-implements, on which the Railroad Commission had effected a reduction at the demand of the farmers. All of his cotton product, he said, had to be shipped to New York either for the bleacheries or for market, and the rates charged took away most of the apparent advantage of being

nearer the cotton supply. Concord, he said, had to pay a higher rate to New York than Augusta, though Augusta was two hundred miles further off. In speaking, therefore, of the relative advantages of the South, the figures have to be changed for every particular place, and perhaps—in the matter of freights—for every particular mill. The only differences which everywhere operated strongly in favour of the South during this time of depression were the cheaper grade of goods made, and the better feeling between employers and employed. The first of these was probably the more important. Cotton manufacture at the South never gained rapidly upon cotton manufacture in Massachusetts until the hard times set in, in 1893. Then the economies forced upon all classes greatly reduced the demand for the fine goods made at the North, but hardly affected the demand for the cheap goods made at the South. As a result, Southern mills were able to keep their hands at work, while Northern mills ordered shut-down after shut-down. The constant work at the South was one of the reasons why the employees were in cordial relations with their employers, though the chief reason was the closeness of social and even church relationships between them, and the great prosperity of the mill-hands compared with the neighbouring farm-hands. These cordial relations existing, the employees had not fought against reductions in wages corresponding to the reductions in prices. The absence of trades-unions had probably



contributed to the same end, for while the Southern cotton operatives would probably get somewhat better wages, and certainly get better hours, if they had trades-unions, they would almost inevitably have resisted any reduction of the old union rates. All things, therefore, have combined, during the hard times, to make production at the South go on unimpeded, while there has been stagnation at the North. Southern factories have multiplied while Northern factories have shut down, and Southern workmen have never had to face the hardships of the unemployed which have been the curse of their fellows at the North. Nevertheless, when a period of rising prices restores the demand for the finer grades of goods, there is no reason why cotton-manufacturing should not again advance at the North, though the present gains of the South can never be lost.

At present there is only one danger menacing progress for the Southern cotton operative, and that is the prospect of negro competition. Thus far all attempts to introduce negro labour within factory walls have been successfully resisted, but each year the struggle becomes more difficult. As the race feeling between whites and blacks gives place to the class feeling between rich and poor, white employers will incur less odium by employing negro labour, and white employees will be less able to stand as a unit in resisting the inevitable competition. At Lindale I heard nothing about this peril, though

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tive corpor-  
ations


even in this white village the number of idle men was increased by the employment of negroes from the surrounding country to serve as teamsters and perform other "outside" labour. At Concord, N. C., however, the negro problem was the most important that presented itself, and the "co-operative" factories I came to study demanded relatively little attention. They proved to be co-operative only in the sense that they had been built in part upon the building-and-loan association plan, which had proved so successful in the neighbouring city of Charlotte. As the shares had often been taken by families of small means, to be paid for by small assessments, the ownership of the mills was widely distributed, and corporation came very near spelling co-operation. Although few of the shareholders worked in the mills, and a few large shareholders, active in the management, owned the bulk of the property, nevertheless economic conditions in this rapidly growing town were in happy contrast with those of Lindale. Instead of all the families being tenants, almost half of the white families owned their homes; and these homes, with their yards and gardens, betokened the social independence of their possessors.

But the sight of a prosperous factory town whose prosperity was created and possessed by its own middle classes was the smaller of the gains that came to me from my visit to Concord. The larger gain was the light thrown on the negro problem. At the time of my visit the leading negro of the town had

A negro  
financier

recently laid the corner-stone of a cotton-factory to be owned and operated by negroes. My first inquiry was, naturally, whether the negro projector could procure sufficient money to equip a factory, and I learned to my surprise that he could very nearly build and equip a factory with his own money. Besides owning a store, he was the landlord of nearly a hundred negro tenements, which returned to him an average of \$2 a month apiece. I expressed a desire to meet this negro magnate, and soon after my lunch he called on me at my hotel. We went together to his office, where he unfolded to me his plans and told me something of his personal history. He was a mulatto who had been born a slave, and, without any aid whatever from his father, had acquired his present property, which included, he told me with pardonable pride, the home of his former master. His present plan of building a cotton-factory he had cherished for years, and he believed it to be on the point of consummation. There were already, he said, eight hundred subscribers for stock. When I asked where they all came from, he showed me on his books that the North Carolinian at the head of the cigarette trust had subscribed \$1000, and that this, that, and the other prominent office-holder or bishop had subscribed some smaller amount. When I asked how many local subscribers there were of his own race, he replied, several hundred. When I questioned him about their occupations and promptness in paying, he admitted that only about one

hundred subscribers had as yet paid anything in, but he insisted that a great many more—labourers, masons, carpenters, and even washerwomen—were willing to pay for their share in labour or by small instalments. Over against the apparent weakness of this support he put the offer he had received from a reliable firm to put in the machinery for his mills and take part of the payment in stock. When I asked him where he would find the men to teach his negroes how to handle the machinery, he said that he expected no difficulty whatever on that score, as “everybody in town” was in favour of the enterprise. To prove this, he proudly called my attention to the Democratic paper’s account of the laying of the corner-stone, and the glowing speeches made by prominent citizens. Everything in this account was laudation of the enterprise and its projector, and yet there was so much eloquence about the epoch-making event that the whole affair had an air of unreality. In fact, I could not persuade myself that its projector believed in the mill as a business enterprise. When he talked about his store or about rent collections, he talked like a business man of uncommon common sense; but when he talked about the factory, he inevitably talked like the solicitor of funds for a semi-philanthropic undertaking. The enthusiasm which the project evoked promised that some day such a plan would be carried through, but I came away questioning whether this shrewd mulatto would ever risk much of his property in the experiment.




This feeling of scepticism deepened when I became familiar with the local sentiment against negroes. Even my cotton-mill superintendent was strongly opposed to the new enterprise—though in his case race feeling was cherished at a sacrifice of material interests. He employed no negroes whatever about his mills, even for teamsters, because, he said, if he employed negroes for this work there would be still more white men in the mill families with nothing whatever to do. When I asked him whether white men could be found to teach the negro hands in the projected factory, he expressed strongly the belief that they could not be found in Concord.

At the time of my visit race feeling was at fever-heat. The Sunday before two negroes had been lynched, and the crime which caused the lynching had kept the blood of the best part of the community <sup>A lynching episode</sup> at boiling-point. Though I had read of such crimes time and again, I had never before felt their reality. I had thought that a low type of whites had been the victims, and had condemned chiefly the outrages of the lynchers whose lawlessness kept alive the race hatreds from which, in part, the original crimes had sprung. When, however, I learned in Concord of the character of young Emma Hartzel, and the utter fiendishness of the assault upon her, the only question I could ask was, "Were they sure they had the right men?" On this point there was no doubt. One of the murderers—for the crime had involved murder—was caught with



blood on his garments and had confessed, while the other, when told by the minister who long had fought the mob to rescue him, that he must not face God with a lie on his lips, had also acknowledged his guilt. There was no question in any one's mind, and the negroes present had sanctioned the execution. I talked with one negro after another regarding the sentiment of their race, and while one or two protested that a white man would have had a trial, the better part felt that the same crime from a white man would have merited and received the same punishment. The Hartzel family lived only three miles from Concord, and to make certain that the praise of the victim had not sprung from the desire to defend the outlawry, I drove out into the neighbourhood. All that I learned increased my regard for the young girl. The son of the neighbouring farmer who had captured the first of the criminals told me anew the story of the crime: Emma Hartzel, his younger schoolmate, had stayed at home the previous Sunday afternoon to take care of her baby sister, while her older sister, her father, and his young wife had gone to church. The family, he said, were as fine people as any in the valley, and Emma Hartzel was a modest Christian girl. The father, he thought, would be willing to talk with me, and so I drove on to the house. The door was opened by the young mother. The older sister, a girl of sixteen, with an attractive, serious face, stood just back of her. The father was not at home, but I knew from the face of



his young wife and daughter that he was the type of man his neighbours had described. As I paused a moment to express my sympathy, there recurred to me the remark of a friend years before, that it was easy to believe in God's fatherhood when all went well, but that it would be impossible if one of your own daughters were the victim of crime. Turning to the mother, I asked, I hardly know how, whether the crime had overthrown her husband's faith. The reply came slowly, but in words which showed the depth of her own religious life: "He is going to live nearer to God." As I stood upon that doorstep and listened to this simple expression of supreme faith, I felt that I was in touch with a higher world of spiritual life; and as I came back North, I felt that for the last time I had condemned these Southern communities for administering justice according to the elemental feelings of manhood instead of the cold processes of law.

### III

#### A PRIMITIVE COMMUNITY

THE saying that a traveller may study any period of history by visiting some people now passing through its stage of development is very nearly true in America. There has never been a time when some part of our country has not been passing through the pioneer stage; and the best way to understand pioneer life is not by ransacking libraries in the East, but by visiting pioneer communities in the West. It is true that no large community is entirely cut off from the use of the inventions made during the present generation; but there are many and large communities where the housework, the garden, dairy, and orchard work, much of the field-work, and even the carpentering, smithing, spinning, and weaving, are carried on as they were in the Central States a generation ago, and pretty much as they were in New England in the days of the Pilgrims. The general industrial and social life is the same. The points of difference are external and easily separated.

When I determined to study such a community, I

hesitated between the mountains of Kentucky, where I knew the life to be more primitive, and the backwoods of Arkansas, where I believed it to be more typical of the pioneer life through which the greater part of the country has passed. The scale was turned in favour of Arkansas by the fact that I had never been there, had never to my knowledge met any one who had been there, and had never read anything about the State except the famous story of the Arkansas Traveller, who found that the native squatter would not shingle his roof while it rained because of the rain, and would not shingle it while it was not raining because there was no need of it. As there are more people in Arkansas than in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine combined, it hardly seemed as if this description could be adequate for them all. At my hotel in Memphis I inquired as to the nearest part of Arkansas where I could find a white community still at work clearing away the backwoods. My informant knew the State pretty thoroughly, and directed me to the region "just beyond Jonesboro'." Accordingly, I bought a ticket to the second station beyond Jonesboro'—a little place called Sedgwick—and reached it in about four hours, most of which were spent in the lowlands of the black quarter of the State. When I stepped out of my train at Sedgwick, my first thought was that the Arkansas Traveller was hardly a caricature. A sawmill, several saloons, and some twenty or thirty sorry-looking houses made up the


A forlorn  
Arkansas  
town

settlement. One of the houses bore the sign "Hotel," and I accordingly went there, only to be told by the help that her mistress was not in, and that she did not know whether I could have a room or not. When I inquired of her something about the town, she replied that she did not know much about it, as she had recently come from the North. A little neighbour girl who was with her was hardly better informed. She had recently come from Illinois, she said. Pretty soon the mistress came in, and seemed less fine in her type than the help. She, too, did not know whether they could take me in as "the Company" did not allow them to take in anybody without permission from the office. I inquired why, without getting any very satisfactory answer, and soon my prospective hostess explained her ignorance by remarking proudly that she did not "belong in Arkansas." She had come from Illinois. "It looks as if pretty much everybody here came from the North," I remarked. "Oh, yes," she replied; "an Illinois lumber company owns everything about here, and nearly all the hands are from Illinois." In short, my typical, lack-lustre, sordid, Arkansas-as-she-is-painted town was not an Arkansas town at all, but a transplantation from the cultured and progressive North! Fortunately for me, before I could go to the office to learn whether I could be housed for the night, a belated freight-train came along and carried me back to Jonesboro'.

The next morning I got my bearings in Jonesboro'

—a thriving town of seven thousand—and in the afternoon set out for “Bill Ishmael’s,” a farm some eight miles in the country, where one <sup>A white community</sup> of the storekeepers had assured me of a hospitable reception and a remarkably intelligent host. The rain was coming down in torrents, and my driver’s two horses were needed for our light buggy at several mud-holes on the main highway. When we left this road, and turned into the lane that led past the schoolhouse to Mr. Ishmael’s, we found the way entirely too dangerous for further travel, and my driver turned into a hardly distinguishable side-path, which bore occasional signs of recent use, and, after half an hour through thickets and over fords, we reached Ishmael’s house, only to find that he was at the school election and that his wife did not brighten at the prospect of company over Sunday. When we left her to make our way through to the schoolhouse, I was quite ready to accept my driver’s previous suggestion that “Butch Dickson’s,” on the main road, was the best place to stop. When we reached the school, we found, as we felt in advance, that Ishmael could not conveniently entertain me, but also found that Dickson was ready to do so. We therefore left the schoolhouse, to which the voters had come on horseback, and, by skilful driving (once dismounting), made our way through to Dickson’s without accident. When I saw Mrs. Dickson—large, clear-eyed, with a complexion in pleasant contrast to the prevailing snuff-dipper’s sallow-

ness, and with a warm-hearted, motherly manner, I knew that I had found the right place. Her boys, fourteen and sixteen years old, were evidently glad to have me come, and were as much interested in New York as I was in Arkansas. While we were shooting at a mark—a ten-cent piece, that I had put up with the result of impressing them with my affluence they told me stories of squirrel-hunts that would have excited the envy of the richest boys in our Eastern cities. It was over two hours before the father returned from the election, and meanwhile the boys and their mother—whom they joked with on terms of affectionate equality—had impressed upon me a good many pictures of neighbourhood life. One of these pictures was particularly vivid and significant. During a day I had just spent in Kentucky, a negro had told me that no one of his race was allowed in a district a few miles away from the town—shotguns being used to drive them off; but his story had been treated as a “scare” by a white friend to whom I referred it. While I was on the cars coming through Tennessee, a Texas farm-hand had told me that no negro labourers were allowed in his district, as “the boys drove them off”—he, an East Tennessee Republican, expressing his sympathy with the sport. This story and the negro’s seemed to corroborate each other, and I therefore was not altogether unprepared when the Arkansas boys told me that there was not “a single negro this side of Jonesboro’.” If any appeared, they were asked what their



business was or told to "move on," and they "always minded in a hurry." When I inquired further about the situation, the boys told me that there used to be some negroes in the section, but that they had "all been routed out." Four of them, the boys explained, murdered Bill Ishmael's sister, when trying to rob the house. One of them was suspected, and some neighbours took him out to the woods and tied a grapevine around his neck, and told him to tell who were with him mighty quick or he would go. The boy was scared, and he just coughed it up as quick as he could, telling the whole thing. All four were caught and locked up, and that night a crowd took them from the jail, leaving word that the sheriff would call at any man's house before daybreak at the risk of his life. . . . There were one hundred and forty horses tied to the trees out in our woods yonder when the hanging took place, but when they come to cut down the bodies nobody knowed who did it." "It was a year," said Mrs. Dickson, "before anybody began to talk so as to show that he was there. . . . There hasn't been a negro family in all this section since that time, except one old man who was allowed to stay. Bill Ishmael hired three negroes a couple of years ago, but the boys warned them that they had better hurry back to Jonesboro', and they didn't dare stay."

Mr. Dickson came in a little before dark, and immediately we had supper, for the boys had already



finished the chores. There was no hired help of either sex about the house, and Mrs. Dickson <sup>The school election</sup> had only the assistance of two shy little girls of nine and ten, one a daughter, and the other an adopted child. On the table there was a great abundance to eat, and the supper was quite enjoyable to those who like Southern corn bread as I do, and who like ham as the Southerners do. Mr. Dickson's side had been defeated in the school election, but he bore the defeat in good spirit. The issue had been the laying of a five-mill school tax to supplement the State allowance of ninety cents for each child of school age in the district. Five mills was the heaviest school tax the State law allowed, and my host and Bill Ishmael, the two richest men in the district, had been the leaders of the party opposed to the full tax. There were eighty children of school age in the district, so that the State allowance was \$72. On the tax rolls there was \$22,000 of personalty and about the same of realty, so that a five-mill tax would yield \$220 more. The division on the school tax, I was told, usually followed property lines. Sometimes the "rich" taxpayers could influence their hired help to vote with them, but the poorer farmers, especially if they had children, usually voted for the full tax. So there were class lines even in Arkansas, and the wealthy class and the dependent poor, here, as elsewhere, formed the bulwark of conservatism.

Almost immediately after supper the farmer led in

family prayers, and we all retired. I was shown to a comfortable guest-room in the second story, and slept soundly until five o'clock the next <sup>A long</sup> morning. We breakfasted at half-past five (a half-hour later than usual on my account, I was told), and after breakfast the farmer and I went to the front porch, while Mrs. Dickson and the little girls attended to the housework and the milking of the cows, and the boys did the remaining chores. The morning was bright and clear, but so much rain had fallen that the family judged it impossible for them all to drive to church, which that Sunday was held at one of the more remote points on the circuit. So the farmer and I had plenty of leisure to talk, for when we had talked what would have been a whole morning in the city, it was not yet the time that I usually reached the office. My host showed no signs of exhaustion, but I was glad to join the boys for a while before it was time for them to go off to church on horseback. When they finally rode off together, neatly dressed, each riding a good horse, they made a very attractive picture. They were both boys of fine character, and were as heartily religious as they were full of fun. Not long after they started to church, Mr. Ishmael's married son, with wife and baby, came to visit and take dinner with the Dicksons, and somewhat later Mr. Ishmael himself joined us. There were now three of them to instruct me in Arkansas economics, and the hours that remained until dinner, and from

dinner until Sunday-school, taught me as much worth remembering in political economy as the same number of weeks in college. The dinner, I may say, did not come until nearly one o'clock. It was incomparably the longest morning I had ever spent, but I would not, as I think of it now, have had it shortened.

When I say that the conversation of these Arkansas farmers was more instructive than college lectures on economics, I mean that it gave a clearer and more accurate picture of vital things in the industrial situation. For example, when I asked about the amount of business done on credit, my host made it clear that it was less than in former years. He told me (and every old farmer, I find, has similar recollections) that he used to see less than fifty dollars a year, and that, too, at a time when prices were much better than they are now. It used to be taken for granted, he said, that farmers would trade everything out. The first year he was on his present farm he put up a "box" house which cost him fifty dollars, and bought on credit all the supplies he could not raise himself. "When I sold my crops at the end of the year, I paid off the balance against me at the Greensboro' store. The next year the butter and eggs and grain I sold at the store amounted to more than I had bought, and when I asked for a settlement, the storekeeper said, 'Ah! what do you want money for? You can trade out what you want. . . . Haven't time to figure it up now.' When I got home, I told my

Doing  
business  
on credit

wife that we wouldn't buy anything more on credit, unless it was medicine. If we couldn't pay for things, we would do without them. From that day to this we haven't bought on credit." Cash sales, he went on, were becoming more and more the rule, though many of his neighbours still bought on credit. Even he used less money for all purposes than city wage-earners need for food alone, and for this he required none. Had a college professor told him that less money per capita is needed to-day than a generation ago, he would have been less willing to pay his school tax than he was already.

When the question of farmers' debts came up, the information I got did not contradict ordinary teachings, but it gave the situation a different colour.


The census returns, as is widely known, show <sup>Mortgages and debts</sup> that in Arkansas, as in most Southern States, only one family in nine carries a real-estate mortgage. When, however, I asked my Arkansas acquaintances how many of the farmers were in debt, they answered, without division, "Nearly all." When I narrowed my question down to the school district, Mr. Ishmael said that out of twenty-eight farmers at the election the day before, ten were in debt to him in sums ranging from ten dollars to two hundred dollars. Only one man, he said, was in debt for as much as his farm would bring, but nearly everybody was in debt in some quarter. Nevertheless the census returns were absolutely accurate. There was hardly a mortgage in the

district. But this was due to the fact that, even when land was sold on partial payments, a mortgage was not given, but a "title bond" was taken, by which the title remained with the seller until the last payment was made. When I returned to Jonesboro', the leading banker of the town explained the system to me in detail. If, he said, you lend money on a mortgage, and wish to foreclose, you have to wait six months for a Circuit Court decree which allows you to sell only on four months' notice, and even after the sale the borrower retains for another twelve months the option to redeem his property. The "title bond," on the other hand, enables you to re-enter the property whenever the borrower fails to make a payment, and sell it upon relatively short notice. The situation of the debtor, therefore, is harder than where mortgages are given; and the fact that there is only one mortgage in Arkansas where there are four in Vermont does not mean that the burden of debt is only one-fourth as serious. It rather means that the burden is four times as serious. The only relieving feature to the situation in Arkansas is that the usury law is rarely disobeyed. Very few loans, the banker told me, carry more than the legal rate of ten per cent.

There was another matter of economic importance which the conversation of this long morning put before me more vividly than any college text-book. This was the burden of the road tax—a subject scarcely mentioned in political econo-

Heavy  
road taxes  
and heavy  
roads

mies constructed after English models. It was natural that this subject should come up, for the road to the schoolhouse the day before had been too much for even Arkansas patience to put up with, and Mr. Ishmael was anxious to get help in patching up some of the worst places. The law, I learned, is that every man between eighteen and forty-five has to give five days' labour to the public roads. Nearly one week's work out of fifty-two must be given to the public in this way. The private roads, of course, require extra work from the men whose lands they run through. But on the public roads the tax is precisely the same for the man who owns fifty acres as for the man who owns five hundred. That there is no justice about such a tax is self-evident, for the wealthy man has ten times his neighbour's ability to pay, and receives ten times as much benefit from the improvement. Here in Arkansas, however—and I found the system general in the South—the same contribution is exacted from the mere wage-earners, even, as from the largest land-owners. I inquired of my host whether there was no protest against this injustice, and he replied that some of the poorer people did complain that it was unfair, but that it was the system everybody had always been used to, and not much was said about it. Of course it was the most wasteful system imaginable, as the repairs were apt to be made when it was convenient for the farmers and not when it was convenient for the roads. Indefinitely less work from men who under-



stood the business would give far better roads. Yet, in spite of all the considerations of justice and economy, the reform was not pushed forward, because the financial interests of the leading citizens were opposed to it. In this respect primitive communities do not differ from others.

When the question of wages came up, Mr. Ishmael, who was the only regular employer of labour in the group, said: "Fifteen or twenty years ago I  
**Wages and earnings** used to pay eighteen dollars or twenty dollars a month. Now I can get a good man for ten dollars." In each case, of course, these wages included board; but this last item must not be reckoned at Northern figures, for the school-teacher, who regularly boarded at the Dicksons' and occupied my comfortable room, paid but eight dollars a month, and a farm-hand's "keep" must be reckoned still lower. The wages of hired men tallied closely with the earnings of farmers. An energetic farmer who had a boy to help him could handle twenty-five acres in wheat, twenty-five in cotton, and twenty-five more in pasture—either clover or stock peas (the latter a splendid fertilizer). This was what a farmer could and should handle, rotating his crops in succession. Very few, however, gave their land any rest for pasture, and forty acres of cleared land was as much as most of them attempted to cultivate. The farmer who handled seventy-five acres would need five hundred dollars worth of stock and machinery—two horses, a cow or

two, at least half a dozen pigs, and wagon, ploughs, harrows, and cultivators, as at the North. He rarely would have a "binder." At the end of the year his cash returns would figure up in about this wise :

25 acres wheat, 250 bushels.....	\$125
25 acres corn, 250 bushels for stock, 500 bushels for sale.....	150
Total.....	<u>\$275</u>
Taxes, machinery, blacksmithing, etc.....	50
Net.....	<u>\$225</u>

This represents the money income of the Arkansas farmer, of the more energetic type, with a boy to help him in his work. In most cases the figures are complicated by the sale of less corn and some stock, but the net returns hold good in almost every case. It is no wonder, therefore, that in Arkansas a dollar "looks as big as a barn door."

The tenant farmer, of course, has a money income much smaller. In case he furnishes all the stock and machinery, he gets two-thirds of the crop and the landlord one-third; but if the landlord <sup>The drift to town</sup> furnishes the capital, and the tenant only the labour, they divide half and half. "Sometimes," said Mr. Ishmael, "the tenant wants you to keep him in food while he raises the first crop; but if you have to trust a tenant for his keep, you don't want him. I wouldn't have such a man about, and neither would



anybody else who knows his business." "What becomes of such farmers?" I asked. "Oh," he replied, "when a man gets too poor to be a tenant, he goes to town." This observation was entirely new to me, but I have found it everywhere true. The towns are being recruited by those too poor to be able to live in the country, as well as by those too rich to be willing to live there; and this drifting helps make our urban districts the centres of both wealth and poverty, while the farming districts remain the strongholds of the independent middle classes.

When the time came for Sunday-school, we all went, and it seemed to me that all the young people for miles about must have done the same. The Church affairs attendance was remarkable—the more so as the singing was ordinary, and the general conduct of the school spiritless. It was obvious that the church was the centre of neighbourhood life, but that the present was not a time of especial religious interest. The "protracted" meetings, I was told, had not yet begun, for these meetings were held in midsummer. Farm-work, including clearing, was too heavy in midwinter to make a good attendance possible, while in midsummer there was a long leisure season, and the heat did not prevent the people from coming out. Apparently they all came, and the religious interest was at times almost universal. My farmer host, in speaking to me, not unkindly, of a young girl whose prettiness and boldness had commanded attention, said

that her mother was "a hard woman." I expressed my surprise at the adjective, for the girl herself was far from looking "hard." "Oh," he replied, "I do not mean that she is bad, at all, but she has gone through a good many revivals without ever manifesting any religious feeling." The evangelical point of view had changed the meaning of words. When we returned home from Sunday-school (and the children had promptly taken off their shoes and stockings), the boys and I took a walk. In the course of it we came across a crowd from the Sunday-school at the creek, and some of them had just been in swimming. Earlier in the day Mr. Ishmael, when protesting against the neighbourhood boycott on cheap negro labour, had maintained that the exclusion of the negro did not keep the white boys of the district from being as full of "devilment" as any in the black belt. My host, on the contrary, stood up for the boys of the district. "About the worst thing they do," he said, "is riding to meeting and then going over the country firing pistols." The bantering at the swimming-hole convinced me that my host's view was the true one, and his boys confirmed it. These boys were thoroughly loyal to their church, and regularly paid "quarterage." The exact sum I do not recall, but the preacher, I was told, with eight appointments on his circuit, got four hundred dollars a year—if he collected it. This last phrase could not help recalling the old story of the Vermont minister who declined an advance in his salary

from four hundred dollars to five hundred, saying that it nearly killed him to collect the four hundred, and he was sure that another hundred would kill him.

But these figures about salaries and earnings did not show the poverty of the people so much as they showed the magnitude of a dollar. Everything I saw

The size of  
a dollar

impressed me with the utter folly of the statisticians who assume that the condition of labour has improved during the last century as much as wages are reported to have risen. A century ago nearly all our labour was rural; and rural wages and city wages are hardly comparable. Take, for example, this minister, with a money income as low as the poorest families on the East Side of New York. He lived, the farmer told me as we drove to town the next morning, in a respectable four-room house on the outskirts of Jonesboro'. He paid six dollars a month rent, and he received so much of his pay in corn and hay that he could keep a horse. He probably kept a garden which supplied his family with vegetables, and his wife almost certainly raised chickens enough to supply them fresh eggs the year round, and fried chicken during the long fried-chicken season. Even if he bought his vegetables, he bought them first hand from the farmers who raised them, instead of fourth or fifth hand, after shipper and railroad and wholesaler and retailer had all been paid. Similarly, he bought his wood of the man who chopped it, and paid one dollar and fifty cents a cord, while I am charged nine

dollars a cord for wood, and my coal costs me as much as wood at four dollars a cord. Four hundred dollars in Jonesboro' to-day—as almost anywhere a century ago—means more comfort than eight hundred dollars now means in our Eastern cities.

My prosperous host, whose money income was not much greater than that of the seventy-five-acre farmer to whom I have referred, offered a still better example of great comfort with a small money <sup>Modern progress</sup> income. His expenses, except for taxes and for machinery, were almost nil. Not only did he raise all his own meat, but he also cured it. His apparatus was, of course, primitive, and the statistical bureaus could doubtless figure out that a stupendous saving of labour would be effected if the meat were packed by the improved machinery of a Chicago firm, and shipped to Arkansas by means of the marvellous economies of railroad transportation. But Farmer Dickson, by using the primitive machinery of his own smoke-house, saved all the cost of transportation and handling which the improved methods demand. Nor did this smoke-house stand alone in saving him the expenses due to our labour-making as well as labour-saving machinery. He showed me the old loom on which his wife still makes carpets, and brought out the quaint homespun blue-jeans frock coat, with short waist and long tails, which he had worn at his wedding. They now bought their cloth, as the economies of modern machinery had at last reduced a blue-jeans suit, wearing like iron, to

\$5, and it no longer paid to weave it at home. But carpets made in the East were not yet cheap and durable enough to throw the old hand-loom entirely out of use. Mr. Dickson also shod his own horses, his primitive and inexpensive forge saving him the trouble of taking the horses to town and the expense of hiring a blacksmith with town rents to pay. Everything, in fact, showed me that the economies due to modern methods of production used by city labourers are grossly exaggerated, both by the capitalistic writers who wish to show that all is going well without the need of reform, and by the socialistic writers who wish to show that the revolution is at hand when everybody can live in comfort with little work, by substituting the "advanced" methods of a colossal combination for the "primitive" methods of individual independence. This farmer, whose methods were, in the main, those used a century ago, was more prosperous than our Eastern city workman with double his money income. It is true that a few things cost him more. He paid from 15 to 20 cents a gallon for his oil, while the city workman got it for 10 or 12. His doctor's fee was fifty cents a mile, and if he brought a doctor from Jonesboro' it cost him \$4 a visit. "It takes a mighty little while," he said, "to run up a doctor's bill of thirty dollars." The shoes for which he paid from \$1 to \$1.40 might perhaps be bought cheaper in a city department store. But all these were minor items compared with the food and fuel and house-rent

and yard-rent which he had at so little cost, and which the city workman secures at such grinding expense. His work was entirely with his hands, and yet, in addition to providing for the current needs of his family, he each year cleared twenty acres of backwoods, and was able to give each son and daughter at marriage a good house on an eighty-acre farm.

My host's prosperity, however, was not typical. He profited by an unearned increment. Except the first ploughing, all the work in the garden was done by his wife, and the half-acre <sup>The main-stay of the family</sup> garden, he said, furnished most of their living.

His wife looked after the poultry, milked two cows, and made the butter. He laid it down as a rule that a farmer's wife ought to sell butter and eggs enough to pay for at least half of the clothing, and I believed his wife sold enough to pay for it all. Mrs. Dickson did not know what women's wages were, for she had never hired help. Yet, as if her hands were not full enough, when a poor neighbour had died leaving an orphan child, she had adopted it. The schoolmaster, as I have said, always boarded at her house, and when I laughingly remarked that the men-folks in her own family gave her almost enough to do, her reply was: "Oh! if I warn't occupied I'd be the miserablest creature living." To the city women who are seeking rest cures, I would recommend an Arkansas farm. It would at least be cheaper. My bill, from Saturday afternoon till Monday morning, including the drive back to Jonesboro', was one dollar.

## IV

### THE NEGRO AS AN INDUSTRIAL FACTOR

WHAT I have written about factory towns in New England and the South, and about farm-life in Arkansas, is what nearly every visitor who heard Conflicting testimony and weighed the evidence would confirm. What I shall write about the negro, however, will perhaps be contradicted by five visitors out of six. The others would not, indeed, contradict the individual statements I shall make, any more than I would contradict theirs, but they would insist, with truth, that I have accepted testimony which they would have disdained, and rejected testimony which they would have accepted as conclusive. The only way, therefore, to make my report impartial is to tell what I saw and believed, but at the same time indicate where my conclusions are rejected by the great mass of intelligent men who have known the negro all their lives.

An example of the necessary rejection of evidence came to me the first full day I was in the South. It was in the little town of Clinton, Kentucky, Negro laziness where I was entertained by a college graduate of exceptional intelligence, who had to some extent

employed negroes in constructing water-works systems. This man not only knows ten times as much about negroes as I do, but in some ways likes them better, so that his adverse testimony could not, apparently, be ruled out on the ground of prejudice. Yet the point about which he seemed surest was the negro's ineradicable laziness. Ordinary negroes, he said, do not work more than one day in six. They may work a few days straight ahead, but then they will knock off, for some excuse or none, and not try to get work till every cent they have earned has been spent. Sixty days in the year would cover all the work they do. He did not question the liberality of this estimate, and when we met at the station a negro employee of his—whom he admitted to be a good workman—the negro was shrewdly non-committal about the justice of his employer's generalization. The crowd of idle negroes about the station gave it apparent support, and my informant would have laughed at my caring what the negroes said when I questioned a group of them at Fulton—the next county seat. I myself doubted their denial, but when, later, I questioned employers of negro labour upon a large scale, I found that the negroes were altogether right and my informant altogether wrong. It is true that at Birmingham the Vice-President of the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company told me that the uncertainty of negro labour made it necessary for his company to keep twenty per cent. more negroes on their rolls than could be at




work at the same time, while with white labour no more need be kept on the rolls than there were places for. But even this moderate estimate of the greater irregularity of negro labour had to be still further modified after my talk with the superintendent in direct charge of one of the Tennessee Company's largest works. The superintendent's statement was that while the negro's tendency to lay off for camp-meetings, funerals, and picnics of course amounted to something, the negro was no more likely than the white man to be away from his job because of drunkenness, and the negro labourers could stand the hot work at the furnaces more steadily than the whites. For the hard, hot work at the furnaces, for which the negroes were employed, he thought that just as many extra men on the pay-rolls would be needed if all the labour were white. When I found that the day's labour was a twelve hours' stretch in the intense heat, I did not wonder that the negro averaged hardly four days out of five. This favourable testimony at Birmingham was supported whenever I talked with men who employed enough negroes to generalize from. On the great cotton plantation which I visited in the Black Belt, the planter told me that his negro tenants worked from sun-up till sun-down day after day, except during the season when the crops were laid by and the "protracted meetings" were held. At a barrel-head factory at Jonesboro', where negro labour was employed almost exclusively, the proprietor, an Indiana man, said that one of the

reasons he hired negroes was because he found it difficult to get white men who worked steadily, though he paid the same wages as at the North. This was probably an exaggeration on the other side. But while negro labour, on the whole, did not seem to be quite as steady as white, the difference was so small that it was hard to account for the gross exaggerations of negro laziness uttered with such confidence by intelligent whites. Apparently the good-humoured contempt in which negroes are held keeps the whites from learning what the negroes themselves think upon such matters, while the disposition to ridicule the inferior race keeps the generalizations to its discredit in perpetual circulation, whereas those to its credit are rarely made and never repeated. Richard T. Ely once said with truth that in the North a fact unfavourable to monopoly rarely gets beyond the paper in which it first appeared. In the South facts favourable to the negroes stand just as little chance of wide citation.

With my strong prejudice in favour of the negro, I, of course, took pleasure in hearing what he had to say about his alleged shortcomings, and rarely did these conversations fail to pay. The <sup>Negro</sup> <sup>theft</sup> negro, more than the white man, is disposed to be agreeable, and it is possible to get his assent to almost any statement you wish. But there is a great difference between a negro's assent to your ideas and his light-hearted expression of his own. It was when they talked freely that their testimony weighed. This first day at

Fulton, what the negroes said in answer to the sweeping charge of laziness was one of the less interesting parts of the talk. One of the group turned from the charge of laziness to the charge of stealing, which, as he said, "the white folks is always bringing up against us coloured people." "Why," he exclaimed, "if us coloured people did as much stealing as white folks say we do, we would all be living in brick houses." Then he went on to say that when coloured people did steal, they never stole much. "One day," he said, "a storekeeper down here had his store broken into, and just a few groceries taken. He was talkin' to me about it, and I told him that negroes had done the stealin'." "What makes you say that?" he says. "Why," says I, "if white folks had done the stealin' they'd have taken all you had, while coloured people only take what they want for a few days, and leave the rest." And, sure enough," he concluded, "it turned out that it was negroes that had done the stealin'." This statement about the amount that negroes stole was confirmed by the whites, and so was a further statement that the amount of stealing done was less than it used to be. My host on a plantation in the Black Belt told me that the negroes would "run out" of the neighbourhood a negro family that stole. When all the chickens were owned by the white people, the negro sentiment against chicken-stealing was naturally lukewarm; but now that a great many negroes own chickens, the rights of property have gained in sanctity. I was told by the



negro financier at Concord that sermons against stealing are now common. It makes a great deal of difference in morals whether our class owns the ox that is gored; and when the time comes when there are wealthy negro congregations, their pulpits, I doubt not, will ring with denunciation of all that assails vested rights, while they become silent regarding pride, extortion, and other forms of inhumanity hated only by moralists in touch with the poor.

But while all that I saw confirmed my prejudice that there is a great deal of our common human nature in the negro, some of my prejudices proved to be entirely out of harmony with the facts. <sup>Who employ negroes</sup>

The most important of these was my prejudice in favour of the men who gave negroes employment. I have still no doubt that there are men in the South who give negroes the preference because of their sense of the injustice practised against the race; but they are men of the missionary type, whose broad human creed cannot be narrowed by the feeling of those about them. I certainly met none of them, and I met several employers whose conscience was alive upon the question of whom they employed. All of these gave the preference to men of their own race. This was first deeply impressed upon me at Jonesboro', where, not far from the "heading" factory, which employed chiefly negroes, was a stave-factory which had never employed anything but white labour. It was in the stave-factory that I found cordial relations between

employer and employed, and the employer—who bore the strangely selected Scriptural name of Moloch—was clearly expressing his own feeling when he said, “People don’t think it right to employ negro labour when there is white to be had.” This was the universal feeling among those who did not hold that the hiring of labour was purely a matter of cents, and not of sentiment. So strong was this feeling among the farmers thereabout that when a manufacturer named Adams opened a stave-factory in competition with Moloch’s, and attempted to run it with negro labour, the farmers would not sell him lumber. “Moloch’s factory,” I was told, “was just lined with bolts, but Adams couldn’t buy any at all, unless he shipped them in on the railroad, and that was too expensive. Nobody would sell to him, and he just had to give it up. He didn’t hire white labour himself, but he sold out to a man who has never hired anything else.” Here was a boycott of a new kind on this side of the water. Boycotts where the boycotters refuse to buy have been common enough ever since our Revolutionary fathers set the example. But a boycott where men of Anglo-Saxon instincts refuse to sell is novel in our annals. No mixed motives of sentiment and economy could be counted on to keep it alive. It was pure self-sacrifice in behalf of a cause.

Of course it may be said that the cause was a bad one, but this does not destroy the moral quality of its support. What your character is does not depend

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upon what you believe, but on how much you are ready to sacrifice yourself for your belief. The South believes in giving the preference to white men, and it is the conscientious men of the South who give this preference. Particularly did I find this to be the case among farmers. The farmers who wished to treat their hands as men preferred white labour; while those who wanted servility, and particularly those who wished to underpay their help, to drive them contemptuously to menial or excessive work, to feed them scraps and lodge them in disreputable shanties, could only get along with negroes.

As a rule, however, employers at the South, as at the North, hire white men or negroes from economic rather than moral considerations, and nearly all large employers hire both. Where both are employed, the kind of work done by men of each colour is usually distinct. At the cotton-factory at Lindale, for example, the whites were employed for all the "inside" work, and blacks for the "outside." In the "yard" the monopoly of the blacks was as complete as the monopoly of the whites in the factory. A white man, I was told, who tried to do any teaming or hauling would soon be laughed out of his "nigger job." At the box-factory in Jonesboro' there was the same distinction, though a different reason was given. "We have negroes," I was told at the office, "to do the driving, unloading, and so on, because white men won't work outside in all kinds of

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weather." At the "heading" factory in the same town, where negroes had been employed for inside work (in spite of a warning the employer had received, signed by "The Jonesboro' Mob"), the employer told me that he hired negroes for "the hardest work," and white men for "the work requiring the most skill." This distinction was the most common one. Closely akin to it was another, due to the greater ability of the whites to take responsibility. In the furnaces at Birmingham, where the negroes outnumbered the whites about ten to one, all the foremen I saw were white. The reason for this, I was told by the superintendent, was not merely the greater ability of the whites to take the responsibility of management, but the unwillingness of the negroes to be bossed by their own race. Thus the "fourth estate"—like our own third estate in the past—is being kept down by its preference for leadership from the class above. On the largest cotton plantation I visited I was glad to find that the foreman was a negro and had shown himself a most successful manager—even when his employer hired convict labour to supplement that of his regular tenants and hands. But such cases were rare. Farmers who expressed to me the strongest preference for negro labour because of its cheapness told me that it did not pay to hire a negro to clear land or to do any work where the hand had to be left to manage for himself. Negro labour, in fact, was spoken of by Southern farmers as Italian labour is by Northern con-

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tractors. You can drive it to do a great deal, but it requires a great deal of driving. One or two farmers who preferred white labour put their preference solely on the ground that you could go away and leave a white workman to shift for himself, while the negro didn't do well unless you were standing over him. The owner of the great cotton plantation, it is true, said that he had no difficulty whatever in getting good work from negro hands by letting them know how much work he expected of them, and praising them for doing the work well. By spurring a negro's ambition, he said, you could get any amount of work out of him. This employer, however, was the exception both in judgment and in kindness. Under ordinary employers the great mass of negroes—even more, perhaps, than the great mass of Italians—work inefficiently when not under close supervision, and even goading. The proverb that “every country has the Jew it deserves” states a principle of wide application. Every country has also the labourer it deserves. The methods used for generations with the slave labour of the South, as with the servile labour of Italy, have left their marks in the irresponsibility of the workmen, their inability to manage for themselves, and their disposition to relax effort when external pressure is removed. They have also left their impress in the negro's unreadiness and inability to handle machinery. Again and again I was told that “machinery doesn't pay with negro labour.” Here again the situation is only a little worse than in



the countries of Continental Europe where servility has long been demanded of the labourers. The first, the one, prerequisite to the industrial elevation of the negro is the development of self-reliant manhood.

My first glimpse of Southern wages upon the present trip came to me at Tennessee City. At this little settlement the woman who came to do the washing for the doctor with whom I stopped received twenty-five cents for her morning's work. "The price used to be fifty cents," the doctor's wife told me, but during the hard times it had come down to a quarter. In this particular case it was a poor old white woman who received these wages. On my way to Jonesboro', a lady who was my table companion at a junction where we both changed cars said that domestic servants—always negroes—in the town of two thousand people where she lived received \$6 a month. When, therefore, I reached Jonesboro', and began to inquire about the wages of negro men in the box and barrel factories, I was surprised to learn that most of them received as much as \$1.25 a day. Where their work was practically the same as that of the whites, their wages were practically the same. Here there had been no reduction of wages since the hard times set in, in 1893. The growing lumber industries in the district had not yet known what slack work was, and there had been no intimation of a cut in wages. Jonesboro', therefore, will furnish a favourable source of statistics when the next Senate Commission attempts

**Town  
wages**

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to prove that wages have not fallen. In New Orleans my inquiries were confined to the workmen in the sugar industries. In the works of the American Sugar Refining Company I found that the ordinary workmen were getting thirteen cents an hour—a reduction of only three cents an hour “since the passage of the Wilson Bill” in 1894. The outside workmen had suffered heavier reductions. The weighers at the docks, for example, each couple of whom received seventy-five cents a hundred barrels before the passage of the Wilson Bill, had been reduced to fifty cents with the withdrawal of protection, and still received fifty cents in spite of protection’s restoration. The greater reduction in the wages of the outside workmen was perhaps due to the fact that this labour was of a lower grade and therefore more exposed to the strain of competition during the hard times. The “roustabouts” who did the loading and unloading of vessels at the wharves were perhaps the lowest class of labourers in the city, and were driven like beasts by their overseers—degradation causing brutality, and brutality causing degradation. The superintendent who was explaining the situation to me narrated that one day one of the roustabouts carrying a barrel up the plank to a vessel slipped and fell into the river, and the foreman’s only shout was, “Look out for that man’s barrel!”

The fall in wages in the city was largely due to the fall in the country, and was greatest where country labour could compete. When I went from New Or-

leans to a great sugar plantation, I found that wages had been reduced from ninety to sixty cents a day the year of the passage of the Wilson Bill. On the passage of the Dingley Bill restoring protection, wages had been increased to seventy cents a day, but this increase seemed to be due rather to the exceptional fairness of my host than to the necessities of the economic situation. When I reached the cotton plantations where tariffs had never affected prices—save of the things that were bought—I found the greatest reductions of all. Six or eight years ago, I was told, wages were seventy-five cents a day, but now they are from thirty to forty cents. I could scarcely credit these statements at first, but they were repeated by different persons with only slight variations. At one time I thought I saw an important qualification when the son of my host on the great cotton plantation in the Black Belt conceded that the old wages were without “rations,” while his father was now paying thirty-five cents with rations. “It seems to me,” I said, “that that makes a good deal of difference.” “Not much,” he replied. “Rations only cost about five cents a day.” And so it was. “Rations”—pronounced rāsh-uns—was not a term whose meaning varied with the generosity of the employer and the capacity of the hand. A week’s rations was always the same thing: “three and a half pounds of bacon and a quarter of a peck of meal”—the former worth about twenty-five cents, and the latter

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but little more than a dime. These, of course, were country "rations." Even in the towns, however, the question whether rations were supplied was but little more important. My negro financier at Concord, who employed a good many men, often had them take their meals at a restaurant, and his bill for each hand was always ninety cents for a full week—eighteen meals at five cents a meal!

But the lowness of money wages on the cotton plantations in the Black Belt is not yet fully stated. If weather prevented work, wages stopped. Wages by the month were not twenty-six times thirty or forty cents, but twenty times these sums, or from six to eight dollars. There were no white farm-hands in this district, so that I was unable to make any exact comparison of farm wages for the two races; but in northern Georgia, where I spent a night upon a much smaller cotton plantation, I found that eight dollars a month with board was now considered fair wages for a white man. In the case of a white man, however, board is considered a much more important item, for the South recognises "equal rights" among white men to a greater degree than the North. The white hand is treated as one of the family, and my hostess in northern Georgia reckoned his board at five dollars a month. A good white farm-hand who lives at his own home and gets his meals from there commands thirteen dollars a month.

The negro hand lives in his own cabin. Even

domestic servants, not only on the plantations, but in the towns, almost always spend their nights in their own homes. They would rather, I was told, pay two dollars a month rent for a shanty (and two dollars a month in the Black Belt is from one-third to *one-half* of a woman's wages) than room in the house of their employer. In most cases this arrangement is essential, for the negro girls marry young, and there are very few years in which they ought not either to be at home with their parents or at home with their children. But, whether essential or not, this arrangement is insisted upon, and these domestic servants at the South have a degree of liberty known only to the higher ranks of labour at the North. Of course this custom had its origin in feelings hostile to the negro, but the negroes cherish their liberty as much as do white girls at the North who work hard in factories where they are their own mistresses during stated hours, rather than do lighter work for larger material rewards in households. Needless to say, the arrangement not only lightens domestic servitude for the servants, but for the mistresses as well.


Of course the pitifully small wages in rural districts are generally supplemented by the produce of garden or poultry-yard, and often by the privilege of cutting all the wood needed for fuel, and even the loan of horse and wagon with which to haul it. In the towns, however, the wages of negroes are in reality even smaller than they seem from the pay-rolls.



To an extent unknown in the North, save in the backward parts of Pennsylvania, the system of company stores prevails, and the extortions practised exceed even Pennsylvania endurance. It was at Birmingham, Alabama, that the extent of this system was first impressed upon me. Here I found that not only coal and iron companies, but even railroads, employed this ancient instrument of oppression. In the case of the railroads, the company itself did not manage the "commissary," but local officials for their own private profit. One official had even taken advantage of his position to raffle off his horse and buggy by the sale of tickets to his subordinates. At this railroad commissary the white employees were not expected to make purchases. One of them said that he had never bought a dollar's worth there, and had never been asked to. It was the employees who didn't get ahead, and thus, as a rule, the negroes, who furnished nearly all the business. The companies are generally two weeks and often a full month in arrears with their wage payments, and meanwhile the poorer employees are given tickets with which they can buy whatever they want at the company store. One manufacturing official who talked with me frankly about the system said that where his manufacturing company paid one dollar in wages it expected to get fifteen cents back in the profits of the commissary. Those aggrieved by the system—including, of course, merchants—were inclined to put the pluckings higher. When I visited the suburban works

of the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company, whose commissary was not classed among the worst, I asked a negro employee what sort of prices were charged. "Something awful!" he replied. "Yesterday, when the clerk handed me out ten cents' worth of sugar, I just stood and looked at it to see how shrunk up it was!" As the commissary was not far off, I also went and bought a dime's worth of sugar, receiving a little package that was one of a pile already done up. I had it weighed at a competitive store in Birmingham. The weight was exactly one pound. At the Birmingham store they kept no pound packages, but the price of sugar in the larger packages was a trifle less than seven cents a pound. In New York it was six cents for a single pound. The negro's story was thus fully confirmed, but I judged that his illustration had been well selected for his side of the case. At all events, an official whom I thoroughly trusted said that the negroes who got hard up for money had no difficulty in selling their tickets to white employees for seventy-five cents on the dollar. The ordinary wages of the negroes at these furnaces were ninety cents a day, so that the ticket for a day's work was worth seventy cents in cash. The white employees who bought the tickets and used them for their own purchases profited by the system.

In Birmingham I heard of tickets on various commissaries selling as high as eighty-eight cents on the dollar, and as low as fifty cents. I had no opportunity to



verify the more extreme stories, but when a week later I visited northern Georgia, I stopped at a blast-furnace a few miles from Rome, where disinterested neighbours told me that for months at a time all the employees, white as well as black, received their wages exclusively in store orders, and that the price for the scrip had frequently fallen below seventy-five cents on the dollar. One Northern manufacturer, who had refused to introduce the demoralizing system into his own factory, spoke of its evils with peculiar freedom. His associate he said, had kept store in the North, and had been interested in comparing prices. At one commissary he had asked the agent the price of a certain sewing-machine. "Forty-three dollars," was the reply. "Can't you buy it wholesale for eighteen dollars?" he had then asked, and the astonished storekeeper had replied: "About that price." At another place, where a tenant behind with his rent had finally paid in store orders, one of these was sent in to purchase bacon. There was sent back what purported to be sixteen pounds, at  $16\frac{1}{4}$  cents a pound; but the bacon actually weighed but eleven pounds, and the cash price for it at the same store was eleven cents a pound. These, of course, were the extreme stories of a manufacturer who was rightly disgusted with the methods used by some of his competitors; but everybody with whom I talked, except officials of companies making use of the system, characterized it as one of extortion where it did not descend to downright robbery. The only excuse



offered was that without it many of the negro families would almost starve. No doubt this excuse was true—just as the same excuse was true for slavery itself. Every abuse furnishes the excuse for its own continuance. But the only way to emancipate the negro from the slavery of the company-store system—which nourishes the improvidence that nourishes it—is by requiring weekly wage payments, and then prohibiting the company-store system altogether. The more degraded negro, when thus made free, will at times long for the fleshpots of credit at the commissary, but what he suffers from thriftlessness as well as what he gains from thrift will make for manhood and progress. The only hope of bettering the industrial position of the negro lies in the development of the self-reliant virtues which slavery repressed. This brings us to the question—the most important of all—Does freedom develop these virtues in the negro?

## V

### THE NEGRO AS A CITIZEN

THAT the negroes have gained under freedom has never been doubted by the most competent witnesses—the negroes themselves. To them, as to us, freedom is a priceless possession, and no material gains could compensate its loss. This the negroes have felt from the beginning, and the intensity with which they have felt it is the supreme evidence of their manhood. Some of the stories told me to illustrate their intellectual and even moral blindness simply showed that they had the same feeling respecting freedom that we would have. This was particularly true of the stories of their devotion to the Republican party—a devotion I have long since ceased to share. In the days when the misrule of the carpetbagger and the negro politician was at its worst, no amount of evidence of corruption weighed for an instant at election-time against the fact that these officeholders belonged to the Republican party—"the party that gave you your freedom and wishes to maintain it." The Southerners who were the kindest to their old slaves, and received from them the most touching proofs of


their devotion, could never by any means persuade them to vote the Democratic ticket. One warm-hearted Alabamian, for example, told me that one of his friends who had helped an old negro in serious trouble had answered the negro's expressions of infinite devotion by saying that the only return he wanted was that the negro should vote with him at the next election. The negro promised faithfully to do it, and when election day came walked with his benefactor a few blocks toward the polling-place. But the negro's face grew steadily more dejected and his steps more halting, until finally, when they came within sight of the booth, the negro stopped and said: "I just can't go with you into that place. I will do anything else for you in the world, but I just can't vote your ticket." Indifference to personal obligations, indifference to repeated pledges, indifference to the character and culture of the candidates, may all be said to have been involved in this refusal; but there was also loyalty, inflexible, unbribable loyalty, to the party that had given him what his manhood declared to be the dearest thing in the world—liberty. Had he not felt as he did, he would have been less of a man.

But the inestimable gain of freedom to the negro need not be discussed with any one who believes in human brotherhood. The debatable question is how far this gain of the prime essential of manhood has borne fruit in material, intellectual, and moral well-being. Upon this question

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from free-  
dom



the testimony of whites as well as negroes is of value, and it must be recognised that a majority of the whites still return a pessimistic answer. But if the question be narrowed down to the tangible signs of material and intellectual improvement, the answers of the whites who know conditions at first hand everywhere show a vast advance since the days of slavery. As regards material comfort there may have been doubt during the first decade after the war, but none whatever now remains. Even on the great Louisiana sugar plantation which I visited, where the planter felt that he could not permit any cutting up of his estate to make home ownership possible, he none the less recognised with pleasure the superiority of the three- or four-room cabins he now provided to the one-room huts of slavery days. In a neighbouring village where some of his hands lived—especially the hands employed only during the busy season—there were several good houses owned by negroes. In this village I was driven about by a negro “justice” who earned his living by acting as pension and insurance agent. Some of the houses he showed me had been bought by back-pension money—the first good fruits I had ever seen of these payments—but others were the result of patient toil and thrift. There was one church also that had been the result of just such self-denial, having been built by a nonconforming religious enthusiast, who with his own hands supported himself in his ministry to his little congregation, and was looked up to as such a minister



always is. In the cotton district (where the small farms that are next to impossible in the sugar industry are more advantageous than large farms) the progress of the negro had been still more marked. It is true that at Uniontown, in the heart of the black belt, the secretary of the school board, when angrily denying that the school system discriminated against the negro, assured me that hardly one negro in ten paid even poll-taxes. But when I visited a great cotton plantation a few miles away, where the planter kept a close but friendly oversight over a large number of tenants, I was told that not only did nearly all the negro men pay poll-taxes, but that a majority owned mules, and a large minority horses and buggies. As neighbouring plantations were broken up because of the listless management of owners who preferred to live in town, some of the negroes were gradually acquiring land. "If they were thrifty," said my host, "they would soon own the county." "If so many of them didn't need a boss," said his son, "we white men would have a hard time of it." The need of bosses, my host remarked, was less now than in former years. Just after the war, he went on, great religious revivals seemed to be constantly going on, and the negroes neglected their crops to attend church. Now the "protracted meetings" were held only when the crops were laid by. Not only did the negroes nowadays make better tenants than they used to, but my host was surer to get his rent from negro tenants than from

white. The progress, it is true, had not been uninterrupted, and the low prices of the last five or six years had reduced many tenant-farmers to mere wage-earners—mule, cow, and plough being sold to pay debts. But even these wage-earners were incomparably better off than the old slaves, while the position of many of the tenants was but little behind that of independent farm-owners.

While in the black belt, I had no opportunity to verify my host's generalization about the negro as a taxpayer. But when in Atlanta, where the tax records for the whole State of Georgia are kept at the capitol, I found that his neighbourhood presented in miniature the rural portions of the whole cotton belt. In most of the rural counties in Georgia the number of negroes paying the poll-tax of one dollar is nearly four-fifths the number of families, while of those who pay the poll-taxes two-thirds are also taxed upon stock, and one-fifth upon farms or town real estate. It is true that the assessments are usually small. But, small as the assessments are—the average being barely one hundred dollars of taxable property for each negro family—it represents an immeasurable gain from the days when the negroes themselves were property. They own but four per cent. of the wealth in districts where they have half the population, but it may be recalled that half of the white people of this country own less than four per cent. of the wealth. If poverty justifies contempt, the contempt cannot follow

The negro  
as a tax-  
payer

race lines. The most thrifty third of the negroes already ranks above the least thrifty third of the whites.

But the gains of the negroes in property are much less than their gains in the material comforts that make for self-respect. Not only are their houses better

**Furniture  
and dress** than formerly in the number of rooms, but still more are they better in their furnishings.

The gain here is so apparent that no one will deny it. Cynicism is more likely to take refuge in the assertion that a childlike love of ornament has led to extravagance in the matter of household furniture. Fully one family in ten has a parlor organ, to say nothing of fiddles, banjos, and accordions. Anglo-Saxon families equally poor would have fewer pictures. Most of the furnishing may be gaudy, but no one who has tried to buy at cheap stores in New York will hold the negro entirely responsible, or say that his taste in this regard is exceptional. As to dress, I was surprised at the good taste frequently shown. One of the best-dressed women I saw in the South was a young negro mechanic's wife who was buying Japanese matting while I was talking with a storekeeper in Jonesboro'. In her case face and manners were refined, and I was glad to see that the storekeeper, whether from a commercial or a gentlemanly instinct, showed her all the courtesy which any woman should expect. On the sugar and cotton plantations the workaday clothes I saw were as cheap as could be imagined, but they were not as disreputable or immodest as I have frequently

seen in the immigrant quarters in New York. My host told me that all the clothing for the women of his own family was cut out by a young negro woman from the fields, who had rare taste and judgment as a dress-maker. At Tuscaloosa on Sunday the dresses of the negro girls presented an extremely bright picture, and showed that the ability to dress well with little means was a gift of the race. Of course the cast-off finery of mistresses contributed much to the splendour of some of the costumes, but as Jane Addams, of Hull House, has pointed out, the desire to dress as well as social superiors is in part an instinct of democracy, and its achievement makes for self-respect. In the case of the negro whatever ministers to self-respect is particularly wholesome. A little girl friend of mine, who cried because the clerks in a store had kissed her, and when asked why she let them, replied, "How could I help it, in this old dress?" illustrates for every circle the close relationship between good clothes and personal dignity.

When we come now to the mental and moral gains of the negro under freedom, we enter the field in which everything depends upon the sympathies of the investigator. Had I gone to the South with the ordinary reverence for the upper classes and the ordinary irreverence for the poor, I should have returned contemptuous of negro progress except along material lines. But I had long ago learned that the upper classes only faintly feel the


The gains  
from school  
and church



sense of brotherhood toward the poor of their own race even, and when members of this class at the South spoke with contempt of the manhood of the negro, it weighed little more with me than the contempt of the same class for negro emancipation a generation ago. It is universally admitted that the negroes make greater sacrifices for the education of their children than the whites, and that their devotion to their churches is at least as great. The difference of opinion only relates to the benefit which education confers upon the negroes and the ennobling effect of their religious faith and experience. For my own part, I do not believe in the regenerating power of intellectual education, whether for whites or blacks; but the gains that come to the negroes seem to me as marked as those which come to the whites. Indeed, they seem more marked, for the self-respect which education gives to the negroes, and which "spoils them as servants" in the eyes of those whose hearts go back to slavery, is to my mind the best feature of negro education—for the fundamental fault of the negroes is not self-assertion, but servility. Their education Americanizes them, and if it makes them poorer menial servants, it is because servants grow better as the degradation of the poor increases—being worst in America, bad in England, good in Continental Europe, and perfection in the Orient.

As to the influence of the negro churches I was hardly more in doubt. Upon this point my knowledge is chiefly at second hand. I had, however, both in

their churches and out of them, first-hand evidence of the genuineness of their faith, and, despite all the inconsistencies we see and experience, I am sure of the transforming influence of such faith. A single incident—trivial, no doubt—may serve to illustrate the nearness and reality of the unseen world in the minds of these people. In a little town in Louisiana I was talking with a group of negro women about the wrongs of their race, when a young girl of eighteen came running toward me, with arms outstretched, crying, "I'se coming to you, I'se coming to you, Master!" Not comprehending the situation, I told her, in some alarm, to stand away, and was relieved to see that she obeyed. The poor girl, I soon learned, thought that I was Jesus, whose second coming she was awaiting, and her disappointment when she learned her mistake was as great as my own embarrassment. She was not, of course, in her right mind; but the form of her illusion, and the way in which her friends regarded it, were unmistakable signs of the vividness of the religious faith of the community. Everywhere the church was the centre of the negro life, the minister was the leader, and the sacrifices made for the support of the churches and the ministers were possible only as the outcome of deep and genuine religious feeling. The scorn with which white people who had no spiritual experience of their own spoke of the negro revivals simply recalled to me the scorn of the upper classes for the religious emotions of the members of my own church in its earlier and




better days. I was glad to find that the best Christian man I knew at the South, and perhaps the best I ever knew anywhere, General Johnston, of Alabama, did not question the genuineness or even the exaltation of the religious experiences of the best negroes he knew. It was unmistakable, he said, from the words they used in speaking of their peace and joy. That their lives were not always in accord with their highest emotions furnished not the slightest proof of insincerity. No one who has read the Psalms needs to be convinced of this.


Nevertheless, it must be recognised that the lives of the negroes were even more inconsistent with their religious professions than the lives of the whites. This was inevitable for a people whose wills were undisciplined and whose conduct was not fettered by social conventions and by the esteem of those about them. Even here, however, the race comparisons were not all unfavourable to the negroes. As regards intemperance, I found, to my surprise, that, while there were relatively few total abstainers among the negroes, and relatively few who voted for "no license" in the county elections, there were also relatively few drunkards. Upon this point there is no question whatever. Even in Uniontown, in the heart of the black belt in Alabama, where the negro population exceeded the white three to one, white people assured me that Saturday nights saw more drunken white men than drunken negroes. The brawls among

the negroes, which resulted in frequent shootings, seemed to come almost exclusively from quarrels at gambling. Gambling, apart from licentiousness, seemed to be the pre-eminent vice of the negro. "A negro," I was graphically told in one of those loose generalizations, or rather universalizations, so common respecting him, "will gamble the shirt off his back." Against this vice the negro churches have set their faces, and I could not help thinking that, in preaching against "crap-shooting" or dice-throwing (as also perhaps in preaching against dancing) more than they preached against drinking, their ministers showed their sense of the great moral dangers to their race. In their virtues as in their vices the negroes resemble the southern races of Europe, among whom intemperance is relatively a lesser evil.

The darkest side of negro character was the frequency of licentiousness. Upon this subject the testimony of the whites—with the exception of a Northern missionary—was unanimous and gloomy in the extreme. Furthermore, the testimony of the negroes was largely confirmatory. In a negro store in Uniontown I had quite a frank conversation upon this matter with a group of men, one of whom was the school-teacher in a neighbouring district. They asserted—and I believed them—that the charges of the whites were grossly unfair, and they pointed out that the whites, not only in slavery times but since, had been responsible for much of the immorality; but they admitted, with



shame, that frequently negro girls were proud of illicit relations with white men, because it seemed to show that they were sought out by those above them. The very next day the driver who brought me in from a neighbouring plantation illustrated the laxity of the moral sentiment of his people against this vice. He was telling me with pride about the success of his sons. His oldest boy, he said, was a dentist in Chicago; his second boy was a cook getting forty dollars a month wages; and his third boy, who was a porter, owned two lots in Uniontown. "How old is your youngest boy?" I asked. "Oh, he's just a boy yet—about twenty." "How did he get ahead so much?" I asked. "Oh, he married a girl that had two children by a white man." The old negro was a little ashamed of this explanation, but not enough to remove the certainty that neither the girl nor her husband had seriously lost caste by the relationship. The whole situation would have seemed next to hopeless had I not recalled the fact that conditions are still somewhat similar in Continental Europe, and that a century ago "society" regarded in the same way illicit relationships with royalty. When we consider the past of even the Anglo-Saxon race, as revealed in the literature of two centuries ago, there is no reason for race scorn. Sexual immorality is unquestionably the worst feature of negro life, but already there has been progress in the lessened frequency of illegitimate children, and the fact that the conscience, the growing self-respect, and



the increasing financial independence of the race are all working against the perpetuation of disgraceful conditions makes it hopeful that social purity among the negroes will in another generation or two reach the European level. So long, however, as an exalted caste lives side by side with a servile one, a thoroughly healthful social morality cannot be secured for either.

The complete breaking down of caste is essential to a sound social system, and of this I saw but few hopeful signs. In the political field the prospects were much worse than when I visited Georgia <sup>Political losses</sup> five years before. At that time the rise of the Populist party, and its saturation, in Georgia at least, with "Tom" Watson's enthusiasm for the elevation of the poor, seemed almost to have secured the recognition of the manhood of all manly negroes. Even the Democratic leaders were obliged to secure the support of negro speakers in order to prevent the stampede of the negroes toward the party already dominant among the middle-class whites, and themselves appeared on the same platform with their black colleagues. The colour line seemed to have broken down, and the time seemed near at hand when all the political rights of the negro, and all the rights that could be secured through political action, would be granted him. A similar change had taken place in Alabama, though there the "Jeffersonian Democrats" were perhaps less imbued with the spirit of humanity than the Georgia Populists, and were less successful in securing negro votes. It

will be recalled that the Jeffersonian Democrats, in alliance with the Populists, carried the great body of the white counties against the regular Democracy, and were defeated only by overwhelming Democratic majorities in the black belt. Until my present visit I supposed that these majorities were the result of ballot-box frauds; but I found, on the testimony of negroes as well as whites, that the mass of the negroes had actually voted the Democratic ticket. The reasons for this were significant, and are perhaps prophetic of the future, if negro suffrage is retained. The poorer whites, as a rule, were Jeffersonian Democrats, and between the poorer whites and the negroes there were few ties, and often a hostility increased by industrial competition. The rich whites, on the contrary, who remained regular Democrats almost to a man, were the employers, landlords, and patrons of the negroes. In every country, under normal conditions, the rich control the votes of the dependent poor, and the division of the white vote in Alabama made conditions there for the first time normal. The result was a conservative party made up in the normal way of the very rich and the very poor—the aristocrats and the negroes—opposed by a progressive party whose strength was in the independent middle classes. Had the Populist party continued to grow—or not grown so rapidly—the political rights of the negroes would to-day be secure. But the capture of the Democratic organization by the Populistic elements brought back within the Democratic

fold a large part of the independents, and took the heart out of the independent movement. It was not to be wondered at, therefore, that clear-sighted Populist statesmen at the South, such as Mr. Watson, actually deplored the triumph of so many of their principles in the Chicago platform. This triumph meant the defeat in their section of the one party which was filled with enthusiasm for the elevation of the poor.

At the present time the independent movements have gone to pieces, and the regular Democracy has no opposition worthy of the name. This situa-  
tion at the South, combined with the sub-  
sidence at the North of the old Republican


The meth-  
ods of dis-  
franchise-  
ment

enthusiasm for the equal rights of all men, have made the present time one of peculiar peril to the political privileges which the war gave the negro. The movement for disfranchisement, it will be recalled, was begun in Mississippi. The Mississippi provision merely restricts the suffrage to taxpayers who understand the Constitution when it is read to them; but my host in Louisiana illustrated its workings by a story which I would fain reproduce in his words. It was about an uncommonly bright negro over in Mississippi who was determined to vote, and studied the Constitution thoroughly before applying for his papers. He brought his tax receipts with him, and they were all found to be properly made out. Then came the questioning to determine whether he "understood" the Constitution. "What," began the judge, "are the provisions of



*Magna Charta*, incorporated in the fundamental law of Mississippi ? ” The negro stood blank for a moment, and then answered in despair, “ I dunno, judge, unless it is that no coloured person shall vote in this State.” “ That’s right,” exclaimed the judge, handing him his papers; “ you are the first nigger that has answered it.”

In Louisiana and South Carolina the constitutional provisions for the disfranchisement of negroes are more obviously unfair than those of Mississippi; and North Carolina is soon to vote on the adoption of Louisiana’s provision explicitly disfranchising illiterates of the race enfranchised by the Fifteenth Amendment. In other States (as in these States prior to the adoption of these provisions) the law already limits negro suffrage by disfranchising those who cannot show their tax receipts, who have changed their residences within a period unreasonably long, or who have done or neglected other things which negroes are peculiarly likely to do or neglect. By these means, as well as by the discouragement to negro voting caused by ballot-box frauds on the part of the Democrats, and carpetbag rascality on the part of the Republicans, the political influence of the negroes has been reduced almost to nothingness, except in the States where there is a powerful body of white Republicans. If North Carolina, where there is such a body of white Republicans, shall adopt the pending amendment, negro suffrage south of Mason and Dixon’s line is practically doomed for a



generation. The question, therefore, is, Will this loss of suffrage prove a curse?

Most visitors, and particularly those who believe, as I do, that the Southern Democrats represent the interests of the agricultural classes, black as well as white, in their demands respecting the tariff, the income tax, the currency, and all the other recent questions of national politics, will answer that negro disfranchisement will prove a blessing. My own view, however, is emphatically the reverse, and upon this point what I saw in the South confirmed my previous judgment. The danger of "negro domination" is the sheerest bogey that class scorn could invent. The fundamental fault of the negro—inbred by generations of slavery—is not arrogance but servility. Where the white people treat him as a fellow man—and often when they are merely kind to him without recognising his manhood—the negro is ready to do their bidding. To make certain the ignoring of negro sentiment, instead of its conciliation, is simply to postpone the respectful treatment of a race whose manhood and womanhood have been debased by contempt. The treatment of the negro as a man is the very corner-stone for the elevation of his manhood, and there is no gain that could come to him from a juster industrial policy in national affairs that could compensate for the lessened recognition of his manhood. As Lowell said in the Biglow Papers, where

The results  
of disfranchisement



Uncle Sam tells John Bull the faith on which the anti-slavery movement rested :

The surest plan to make a man  
Is, think him so, J. B.,  
As much as you and me.

But the gain that has come to the negro from the suffrage is not merely in the recognition of his manhood, both by himself and by others; the suffrage has been the powerful stimulus to his intellectual advancement. That political responsibility educates cannot be questioned by any one who has compared our own working people with the apathetic drudges of countries ruled by the upper classes. But the negro is not only educated by his possession of political power, but this possession has been the chief incentive to the schooling that has been given him. It is not in England alone that popular education has received its greatest impetus from the recognition of the conservative classes that they "must educate their masters." In this country also the negro's possession of political power has made essential the sacrifices of the whites to educate him. The South deserves great credit for the generous support it has given to negro schools, but it is no discredit to the South to say that no such support would have been given had it not been for negro enfranchisement; and it is inevitable that the adoption of constitutional amendments disfranchising the negro so long as he is illiterate will cut at the roots of the white demand for

The suffrage and education



negro education. As I write this, I have at hand a tract published last year by a Louisiana educator, showing that already the loss of political power by the negro has resulted in discriminations against negro schools. In 1884, says this tract, citing the State school reports, the average monthly payment of white teachers in Louisiana was thirty-one dollars, and that of negro teachers twenty-nine dollars. In 1895 the average payment of white school-teachers had risen to thirty-five dollars, while that of negro teachers had fallen to twenty-five dollars. Meanwhile the school year, formerly five months for both whites and blacks, had been increased half a month for the whites, and cut down half a month for the blacks. While I was in Louisiana I heard of just such discriminations in a talk I had with some negroes; and when I went to the black belt in Alabama, and looked into the matter with some care, I found that the testimony of whites as well as negroes established the fact of the discrimination.

Here again, however, the white support of the negro testimony came only from those who knew about the situation at first hand. On my way to Uniontown, my travelling companion in the train was a lawyer of high standing, who told me with obvious truthfulness that the law made exactly the same provision for the education of both whites and blacks. So proud was he of the situation that I expected to write with some enthusiasm of the justice

Discriminations  
against negro schools

and generosity of the town school system. But when I spoke of the matter to the men in the negro store—one of whom, it will be recalled, was a school-teacher from a neighbouring district—I was promptly told that the white schools, both town and country, were kept open half again as long as the coloured. I remarked to them that I was about to call on the secretary of the school board to get his view of the situation, but this prospect did not call forth any serious modification of their statement. They were ready to have the matter referred to the school official, though they did not care to be quoted. When I called on the school official, his answer to my first question was: "Exactly the same provisions for both races. The State of Alabama makes no distinction." "But," I remarked, "some negroes have just told me that their school closes a good deal earlier than the white schools." "Oh, yes," he replied, "but they are all run the same number of months with public money. The white schools are kept open three months longer as pay schools—at four, six, and eight dollars a term." "Are the poorer white scholars withdrawn when the pay term begins?" I asked. "Oh, no," he replied; "there is always money enough contributed so that we don't have to ask the poorer scholars for anything."


This official was positively indignant with me because I still felt that there was discrimination against the negro. "Don't the white people," he demanded, "pay all the taxes?" To this I could only reply that

in some of our Northern cities the immigrants paid hardly any taxes, but that we should feel that there was discrimination if we closed their schools three months earlier than we did our own. "But these negroes," he replied, "just don't pay anything. . . . Nine-tenths of them don't even pay their poll-taxes." This last statement, I soon learned, was altogether—inaccurate. Even the few propertyless negroes who failed to pay poll-taxes were compelled to work out a road-tax, which in Uniontown amounted to ten days a year for all who were unable to pay five dollars in cash. But the injustice of negro taxes—almost irremediable if the negroes are deprived of the suffrage—is not now the matter in point. To this school official the idea of education as a human right, which the State ought especially to provide for the poor, was completely accepted in the case of the whites, but completely rejected in the case of the blacks. To his parting remark, "If you lived here, you would think as I do," I had no reply. Apparently he represented the sentiment of his community.

I did not again allow myself to discuss the equal educational rights of the negro, but my subsequent observation only made more clear the discriminations against him. A negro teacher, I afterwards learned, was paid thirty-five dollars a month for a school of the same grade for which a white teacher was paid forty-five dollars. Here the difference in wages perhaps corresponded to the difference in the teaching, and there

was no obvious injustice. But the superior white teacher was only expected to look after twenty-five scholars, while the inferior negro teacher was compelled to look after fifty scholars! Recent examinations of Southern school reports have proved that this district was almost typical. Wherever the negroes are denied equal political rights, they are also denied equal educational rights. Disfranchisement means injustice all along the line.

But, it will be asked, cannot the charity of the whites be trusted to defend the blacks if they are made unable to defend themselves? My answer to this is, No; and I speak without sectional feeling. The whites of the South—the purest Anglo-Saxons in this country—seemed to me, among themselves, more democratic than the whites of the North. The doctrine that “a man’s a man for a’ that” is not only proclaimed on the stump, but felt by the people. But this feeling, whether political or religious, does not extend to the negro. There has been an immense gain since slavery days; and even then, as one fine old lady told me of herself, there were always many who prayed that some day the negro might be free. There is not now the slightest desire for the restoration of old conditions, and even those who do not yet feel a moral horror of property in a fellow man recognise to the full Henry A. Wise’s old maxim that “black slaves made white slaves.” But all this marvellous gain has not obliterated the race feeling which alone made slavery possi-



ble; and if charity could not a generation ago be trusted to restore to the blacks their elementary rights, still less can it be trusted to-day to give them their higher rights.


There is here no occasion for self-righteousness on the part of the North. The white people of the South feel just as we would feel were we in their places. But if our duty ended when we put ourselves in the places of the Southern whites, The Southern feeling toward the negro we ought, from the beginning, to have accepted their attitude toward the negro. Our duty now, however, quite as much as a generation ago, demands that we should also put ourselves in the places of the Southern negroes, and when we do this we are bound to protest against the movement to despoil them of the most ennobling privilege conferred by our fathers' struggle for human liberty. Putting ourselves in the places of the whites must rid us of self-righteousness for our section; but putting ourselves in the places of the negroes must rid us of self-righteousness for our race. There are, indeed—and there always were—evidences of rare kindness toward the negro. But to those who realize that the giving of all of our goods to feed the poor, without respect for them, profiteth nothing, this kindness toward the negro promises nothing in the development of his manhood. There are, it is true, an increasing number of Southern men who respect the negro's manhood, and are ready to treat him as a man and a brother. At Tuscaloosa, Alabama, I learned of



white men who taught negroes in a theological seminary, and of one who had gone as a missionary to Africa. These teachers, too, were treated with courtesy by the more religious members of their church, and only the more fashionable looked askance at them. But, in general, anything that looked toward the treatment of any negro as the equal of any white was regarded with fierce intolerance. Two illustrations in particular recur to me. One was in a railroad car, where my seat companion was talking of the "Jim Crow" car law. "We are willing to treat the negro well if he keeps his place," he said, "but we won't have him ride in the same car with us." "What would you do if one came in?" I asked. "We would have the conductor tell him to get back where he belonged, and if he didn't move mighty lively, we would slam him out. Last year I helped dispose of a man of that kind, and we handled him pretty rough." "But," I remarked, looking across the aisle, "there is a negro woman over there. Nobody seems to object to her." "Oh," he explained, "she's just a nurse. Nobody minds that." "In other words," I said, "if a negro, no matter how low, comes in as a servant, you are ready to sit next to her; but if an educated negro comes in as an equal, you will mob him." "Yes," he replied, without any sign of feeling, "that's about the size of it. We won't have negroes putting on airs."


This man was not especially fine in his fibre, and his view might be thought to represent that of the rougher

element. But the other incident I shall relate is of a manufacturer of the finer type, morally and religiously. He was speaking to me of the principal and teachers of Scotia Seminary, the Northern Presbyterian school for coloured girls in his town of Concord, N. C. I had just been visiting the school, and had been tremendously impressed with the work it was doing for the elevation of the negro girls who attended it. I asked the manufacturer how the teachers were received in the town. "Oh," he replied, "they are not disturbed any—but nobody ever calls on them." "But the President," I said, "spoke of preaching in one of the town churches." "Yes," he replied, "we think very well of him. Sometimes he has been invited out when Northern capitalists have been visiting here; but his wife never was, nor any of the women teachers." "Why not?" I asked. "Well, it's the way they treat the coloured girls." "How?" I asked. "Oh, they go around with them just as they would with white girls." "They are refined women, aren't they?" "Yes, I presume so, but I wouldn't have a sister of mine associate with any woman who associated with negro girls as they do." It was clear, from the way he said it, that any woman who refused to join in ostracizing these teachers would herself be ostracized. "You wouldn't like it," he continued, turning the argument against me, "to be associating with negroes all day long, and making friends with them?" "I might not like it," I replied, "but I certainly have the




highest regard for the people who are willing to do it. It seems to me they are doing just what Christianity demands—treating others as they themselves would wish to be treated. In fact, I don't see how Christ's words permit anything else." Fortunately, the manufacturer was too religious a man to speak lightly of Christ's words, and too free from casuistry to explain them away from their natural meaning. His frank reply was, "We don't apply our Christianity in just that way."

This man expressed the truth of the situation. Neither the principles of democracy regarding equal <sup>Applied</sup> rights nor those of Christianity regarding <sup>Christianity</sup> brotherhood are felt by the Southern people to apply to their treatment of the negroes. This does not mean that they are less sincere than the people of the North in their devotion to these principles. In fact, to-day, Southern Democrats are justly rebuking Northern Republicans for refusing to apply these principles to the Filipinos; and certainly Northern Christians who believe that there are intellectual difficulties in the way of treating Filipinos as Anglo-Saxons would wish to be treated, ought of all men to recognise the sincerity of Southern Christians who believe there are intellectual difficulties in the way of treating negroes as Anglo-Saxons would wish to be treated. Nevertheless, all that I saw in the South confirmed my belief that only through faith in the simplest application of the principles of democracy and Christianity is the




further elevation of the negro race to be achieved. The most hopeful work I saw anywhere was in Scotia Seminary, where the teachers showed such sublime devotion to the principle of human sisterhood—faith deepening into feeling. The school seemed to me narrow in its curriculum. But I felt that were I a negro I should be glad to study the classics, where this study was considered the privilege of the higher race. In education the spirit is everything, and in this school the spirit was the recognition of the higher powers of the negro. As I watched the young women in the corridors, and as they came into the president's office, I felt that they had been almost transformed by the ennobling atmosphere in which they lived. What will be their future I do not know, though the president spoke with enthusiasm of the lives of the graduates in the past. But as to the present refinement of these young women there could be no question. In no school that I have ever seen will forty-five dollars—the price of a year's tuition, room, and board—go so far in securing the moral and spiritual as well as the intellectual advancement of the scholars who attend it.

Work of the highest order, like this, however, is rare, though in the end I believe the spirit of this school will be recognised to be the spirit of Christianity. In fact, hopeful signs of any <sup>The dominant forces</sup> sort are rare, save the signs of the progress already made. As to the future of the negro problem, I cannot formulate views of which I myself am con-



ident, to say nothing of persuading others of their justice. Individual features of the situation impressed themselves upon me with great vividness; but these features often seemed manifestations of conflicting forces whose resultant I am in no wise able to estimate. There were many things—such as the increasing morality of both races, the increasing independence of negro farmers, the increasing unwillingness of negroes to accept patronage, and the readiness of the whites to make sacrifices rather than subject white labour to negro competition—there were many such things that seemed to promise the wider and wider separation of the two races. On the other hand, in the industrial world, which I especially examined, there were many things which seemed to promise the harmonious working of the two races side by side. Two of these are worthy of mention. In the first place, the struggle to exclude the negroes from different occupations is a losing one. The interests of the richer whites are opposed to it, and, as the old aristocracy of birth gives place to the new aristocracy of wealth, the wealthy class will less and less allow its employment of cheap labour to be hampered by the race sentiment of the poorer whites. Even in the cotton industry—perhaps the last to hold out—the signs multiply that a few more years will find white capital employing negro labour. The interests of capital do not recognise race lines. In the next place, when once an industry is invaded by negro labourers, the interests of labour do



not recognise race lines. A few years ago, when I visited the South, it seemed as if the desire to exclude negro competition was the one thing that would force white labourers to organize. On this visit, both in Birmingham and Atlanta, I found that unions had been obliged to take in negroes in order to carry forward their work. The labour problem is bound to force its way to the front in the South as well as the North, and the fact that the trades-unions have been compelled to treat the negro as a man and as a fellow means that the force that is working for industrial democracy is working to obliterate the contempt of the white for the manhood of the black. If, therefore, the present reaction to deprive the negro of his political rights can be resisted until the white vote again divides on economic issues, I believe that the dominant forces—industrial, political, educational, and religious—will continue to develop the manhood of the negro, and justify the faith of those who died for his emancipation.

## VI

### THE COAL MINERS OF PENNSYLVANIA

THE problem I learned most about in the anthracite coal districts in Pennsylvania was not the coal problem, but the railroad problem. Two-thirds of the <sup>A contract-</sup><sub>ing market</sub> mines were owned by the railroads, and the independent operators were vastly more concerned with the railroad question of getting their coal to market than with the land and labour questions of royalties and wages. All the operators, whether connected with the railroads or not, complained of such stagnation of trade as I had not heard of even in the New England cotton districts. An official connected with one of the railroad mines said that the miners for several years had averaged only one hundred and fifty days' work a year, whereas they used to average two hundred and seventy or two hundred and eighty. He could see no chance of relief unless a third of the people left the business. The independent operators agreed with him as to the stagnation, but had a very different remedy to propose. Their market, they said, was being taken away because the railroads charged three times as much for hauling hard coal as they

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charged for hauling the soft coal brought from the West. The independent operators were demanding with vehemence that their rate should be lowered, and were organizing to build a railroad of their own if their demands were not granted.

Here was a railroad strike of a new kind, and the strikers were as interesting "working people" as I encountered. Bismarck long ago remarked that it is always the best-paid people who <sup>A novel railroad strike</sup> strike hardest, and in this case the "strikers" seemed to be the best-paid and most successful men in Scranton. They had the facts in the case at their fingers' ends, and the statements they made were generally borne out by examination of railroad reports.

In talking with the railroad official I had been strongly impressed with the greater cheapness of soft coal. To mine a ton of hard coal, he said, cost a dollar for wages, nearly half a dollar for royalties, and over half a dollar for interest on capital and minor expenses. Soft coal, on the other hand, could be mined at a total cost of seventy-five cents a ton, and a ton of soft coal would make as much steam as a ton of hard. Therefore, he urged, it was cheaper for Eastern cities to bring soft coal from Ohio and West Virginia than to use the hard coal from near at hand. The independent operators did not admit this. It was true, they said, that the large sizes of hard coal cost three times as much to mine as soft coal, but the "buckwheat" size of hard coal, which they sold for



steam-making purposes, cost as little as soft coal; in fact, they received for it only 58 cents a ton at the mines, and the \$1.80 charged at seaboard was nearly all a payment for freight rates. As an example of how exorbitant these rates were, one of them turned to the reports of the Delaware and Lackawanna, and pointed out the receipts and expenses of the road's coal traffic. The exhibit was as follows:

Receipts.....	\$10,048,000
Expenditures.....	<u>3,700,000</u>
Profit.....	\$6,348,000

Such profits for railroads cannot be paralleled outside the anthracite coal districts. Upon most roads a profit of fifty per cent. upon expenses is considered satisfactory, but here the profit was nearer two hundred per cent.

The remarkable character of this report led me to ask this operator why it did not pay the railroads to buy up all the coal lands and make sure of the coal traffic perpetually. "The companies," he said, "seem to think they can go on forever charging their present rates, and aren't willing to pay for the independent mines the prices asked. The result is that about every five years a new road is built into this district, though the coal traffic hardly increases at all. If the old roads had had sense enough to lower rates for two big operators, or buy them out, the Ontario and Western never would have tapped this district. The other roads

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were charging us fifty per cent. of selling prices for hauling our coal to tide-water; and the Ontario and Western made a perpetual contract with us for 100,000 tons a year at not to exceed forty per cent. In almost no time the other roads had to meet the Ontario's rate. Since tapping this district the Ontario had increased its net earnings from \$700,000 a year to nearly \$3,000,000.

"At the present time we are organized to get another reduction in rates. If the roads do not give it to us, we intend to build a road for ourselves. We pay to tide-water [about 150 Another needless railroad miles] an average of \$1.40 a ton, or nearly one cent a ton-mile. The cost to the railroads is not more than three mills a ton-mile. On Carnegie's new road from Pittsburg to Lake Erie, where there are special coal-cars carrying about fifty tons each, the cost of coal-carriage has been reduced to one mill per ton-mile. The Chesapeake and Ohio reports that its average *charge* for hauling coal is only a little over two mills a ton-mile, and the road is doing well. It is useless to appeal to the Interstate Commerce Commission or to the Legislature. The only way to get reasonable rates is to build our own road, and that is what we have made all our plans to do. I have constructed a railway in New Mexico for \$6,500 a mile. Here we count on a capitalization of \$50,000 a mile. Yet if we ship only three million tons and save only half a dollar a ton, the gain will be a splendid return

on the cost of the road." At that time the city expected the new road to be put through, and looked for lower rates. Yet nothing was clearer than that the new road, if built, would soon establish the same open rate as its rivals. In the long run, its construction would simply mean the waste of several million dollars in diverting from the old roads traffic which they could handle at less cost than the new. In avoiding the socialism of reduced rates we have developed the anarchy of needless railroads.

Meanwhile the soft coal from the West—which every road must carry at competitive rates or lose the business—continues to blacken our Eastern cities. Ordinances to protect them from darkness and dirt go for nothing against the greater cheapness of the Western fuel—cheapness due largely to the discriminations practised by the Pennsylvania roads. Even on some of these very roads passengers are subjected to the grime of soft coal. I asked an official of one of these roads why his company bought soft coal when it mined hard, and received an explanation that did not explain; but an independent operator made the whole matter as clear as day. 'Why,' he said, "the Lehigh burns soft coal in its engines because it doesn't want to lose the profit on hauling its own coal to tide-water. The anthracite roads report to each other the amount they mine, and none of them wishes to go over its apportionment. The more the Lehigh burns, the less it can ship to

The black-  
smoke nuisance

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tide-water; and as it gets a clear profit of \$1.20 on every ton it ships, it cannot afford to burn its own coal." So the Lehigh smokes its passengers with ill-smelling bituminous coal brought from the West rather than use clean anthracite coal from its own mines, because the combination is keeping down the production of anthracite and keeping up the rates for hauling it.

But enough of railroad problems. When I reached Hazelton, I began to meet miners; and while a miner is of less economic importance than railroad rates, he possesses vastly more human interest. I arrived at Hazelton a little before supper-time, and went at once to an open mine in the outskirts of the place. The miners were just leaving their work. The first group I met were Italians, and the talk with them was notable only for its barrenness. The men evidently regarded me with suspicion, and when I ventured to ask whether any of the miners belonged to trades-unions, I was answered with an untruthful negative—conveyed in the form of a rather inarticulate grunt. A moment later I fell in with a stationary engineer of American birth, and in a few moments he was talking with the utmost freedom about his own work and wages—though my questions had related only to general conditions in the mines. His wages, he said, were the same now that they had been since "Cleveland's first term." They were then cut from \$1.55 a day to \$1.40, and had never varied

Typical  
miners

since. His engine had to be looked after whether the mine was running or not, so he got his "twelve hours a day" pretty regularly. Unless he was sick, he received \$8.40 a week. On this sum he had brought up a family. "It is pretty skinny living," he said, gravely, "but we have somehow kept a-going." The man had an attractive face, and was evidently hard-working, sober, and home-loving. His cordial support of the anti-machine candidate for governor made us politically in sympathy, and thus perhaps it was peculiarly easy for me to put myself in his place and face life as he had to face it. It was a sober outlook, and it was difficult to see how any exertions on his part could have brightened it.

But even this man's position was less serious than that of the next mine-worker I talked with. This time it was a young man, so completely covered with grime that I could not have told whether he was good-looking or ill-looking. He did not tell me his wages, and, of course, I did not ask him; but his work was that of a driver, and an old miner afterwards told me that his wages must have been \$1.42, \$1.58, or \$1.75 a day, according as he drove one, two, or three mules. But in his case it was not the amount of his day's wages that he complained of, but the number of days' wages. His generalizations upon this point were no more gloomy than those of the coal-company official I have already quoted; but it is one thing to hear about one hundred and fifty days' work a year from one of

the men who pay for the work, and another thing to hear about it from one of the men who are paid. Just lately, said this driver, his work had been pretty steady, but for a long time before he had worked only two or three days a week. He was the only one in his family getting wages, for his father, who was fifty-two years old, had had miner's asthma and could not work underground. Outside work his father could still do, but there was none to be had. His sisters were only ten years old and four, and so they could not earn anything yet. Therefore, he, a boy of only sixteen, with irregular earnings, was the only support of his family until better times brought his father work again. It was the problem of the unemployed presented in an individual life, and its seriousness became more vivid than statistics could ever make it. The boy told the story with no thought of an appeal for sympathy. He faced the future without wincing, and as he went away into the darkness towards his home I admired from the bottom of my heart the manliness of his spirit. Yet the manliness of his spirit was, after all, a sad substitute for boyishness. The hopefulness of boyhood seemed to be gone, except once when he said that he was only a driver now, and must become a miner "to live."

Before I returned to supper it was clear that I would have no difficulty in learning how American miners lived; but what I had come into the district for was to study the Americanizing of the <sup>The Lat-timer riots</sup> Huns and Italians. The way to do this did not open

up to me until the next day, when I met a Welsh miner of unusual intelligence, who had been discharged at the time of the riots at Lattimer, because of his sympathy with the Huns. In his discharge his employers seemed to have made a serious mistake, for I met no one, not connected with the coal companies, who put the employers' side with so much fairness when telling about the disorders. But, be this as it may, the occasion of this Welshman's discharge had given him the confidence of the Huns, and when he drove me out to Harwood, where some of the rioters were organized, I was received on a friendly footing. Into the history of this riot I have no desire to enter, for it is an almost endless story, and there is no hope of a statement to which both sides would agree. It is not, however, to be ignored as ancient history, for the feeling it created, and the feeling that created it, still remain. The rioting would not have taken place had not the ignorance and suspicion of the Hungarians been supplemented by the ignorance and suspicion of the employers; and the perseverance of this mutual attitude may yet create another riot. To each side its own position has seemed to be almost wholly right. It is true that the more fair-minded miners admit that some of their comrades were forced to quit work by threats of violence, but they all maintain that they began the fatal march to Lattimer practically unarmed and intending to keep within the law. There is no doubt that these were their instructions from the union.

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Fahy, the Irish organizer, told them that if they resorted to arms and the sheriff couldn't put them down the militia would, and if the militia couldn't the regular army would, so that there was absolutely no hope along that line. Complete order, the men claimed, was preserved where the sheriff first met them at West Hazelton, though one of their number was knocked down by a deputy. They felt that they had a perfect right to march to Lattimer on the public road. When they were finally stopped by the sheriff and eighty deputies, they were already near Lattimer, and determined to go on. The Huns claimed that the sheriff was merely "pushed aside" by the crowd when he tried to read his "paper" (the riot act). When, however, the three volleys had been fired, and comrades killed, the miners of the whole region were aflame with a desire for vengeance. This was the night when members of the employing class at Lattimer slept in the woods, and there is no doubt that their fears were justified. Lattimer would have been burned that night, I was told by one of the miners, if a crowd which set out from Harwood had not been stopped by a Baptist minister named Spaulding, who had their confidence because he had been on their side in the strike. By him the Huns were persuaded to trust to the law. Their societies all over the country contributed money to prosecute the case. But the trial, which led the general public, even in Hazelton, to justify the sheriff, did nothing to calm the wrath of the miners. They



pronounced it a farce, and ridiculed without stint the affidavits which the employers had procured from their own number. Any employer, they said, could get affidavits from men who wanted to keep their jobs. Both the evidence that was received against them and the evidence on their side that was shut out by the court intensified their sense of injustice, and therefore the old bitterness still remains. From the standpoint of the employers, as every one knows, the action of the authorities from beginning to end was not only justifiable but unavoidable. They believed that a mob of Huns made violence inevitable and arson and murder probable. As one thoroughly kindly man among them told me, they felt that the lives of even women and children were not safe. But had employers and employed been in neighbourly relationships with each other, the tragedy would never have taken place. I happened to ask the employer whom I have just quoted whether the American families looked after the Hungarians at all in times of sickness, and his answer photographed the whole situation: "We don't know they are sick till we see the funeral go by." Out of such relationships there is no limit to the ill feeling that may arise.

The town of Harwood, where I met most of the Huns, is now largely a Hungarian village. A few American and Irish families remain, but this element is being gradually crowded out and often crowded up. "The brightest Irish

A Hun-  
garian vil-  
lage

boys," one of the operators told me, "do not work in the mines, but go on the railroads, or into stores, or teach school." The elevation, therefore, of a part of the class that used to do the mining needs to be borne in mind in considering present conditions. Wages now, I was told by old miners, are only about half what they were a quarter of a century ago; but the present wages, in large part, are not paid to the children of those who used to do the work, but to the Huns and Italians. To these later importations the low wages of the past decade are an improvement on anything they have known before, and they are improving their condition by means of them. This was what struck me most forcibly on my visit to Harwood. Twelve years before I had gone to a mining city in Pennsylvania (Shenandoah), and had been impressed with the squalor in which the Huns lived, as contrasted with the self-respecting comfort of the Irish homes. Most of the Huns I then saw were young men "bach-ing it" in boarding-houses, with only one cooked meal a day. At Harwood the Huns I met had their families with them, and seemed to be living in relative comfort, in spite of the slack work. The fact that it was Sunday afternoon and that everybody was in his Sunday best may have had much to do with the favourable impression, but these Hungarian miners were certainly of a higher type than my previous observation had led me to expect. Nearly all of them, men as well as women, had been to church in the morning,

though their church was at Hazelton, five miles away, and there was no trolley. Being Sunday, it was their feast-day, and yet I saw no drunkenness. This may have been partly due to the fact that the town, like most of the mining towns, was "no license" under the regulation of the mining company, which owned all the surrounding land. But this form of local option did not mean the entire prohibition of liquor, and every pay-day, I was told, the streets of the town had a perfect procession of beer-carts. But the people were not heavy drinkers, and between the contradictory statements that the Huns "drank up all their wages" and that they all "saved a good part of their pay" I was forced to prefer the latter as the lesser prevarication. A good many of them evidently did get ahead, and most of those who did not guarded themselves and their families by a form of co-operative insurance, which I wish were more general. They belonged to a Hungarian society which extends over several States and has something like thirty thousand members. To this they pay assessments amounting to about one dollar a month, and receive as benefits five dollars a week during sickness and five hundred dollars in case of death. The insurance against sickness did not seem in any degree to have proved an "insurance of sickness." Just as in trades-unions, the sentiment was strong against fraud upon members of their own class, and there were three men in every locality, besides the physician, to look after the validity of every claim.

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But the fact that conditions in this Hungarian town were better than I expected to find must not lead me to paint them as bright. It was a foreign town, and I instinctively judged of it, as the people themselves did, by the foreign standards to which they had been accustomed. Judged by American standards conditions were bad enough. Because of my escort I seemed to be received with friendly confidence, but my escort told me that only the men who were not now employed by the coal company dared talk with me about labour troubles. It was not a free town. One point of freedom however the people had gained by the great strike. They were now allowed to employ their own doctor. Prior to the strike they had to call in the company doctor, and seventy-five cents a month—or fifty cents in case of single men—was deducted from their wages to pay him. Now they themselves pay precisely the same amounts to doctors of their own choosing. Very likely the present doctors are not as skilful as the old, but one step toward self-government has been taken. Put yourself in their place, and you will feel as they do about it. The more important object of the strike, however—the removal of the company-store system—had not been attained at all. Conditions in this respect were almost as bad as in the South. Pay-day was the fifteenth of the month, but the men were paid only up to the first. Their wages, therefore, were never less than two weeks in arrears. In this way only

Company  
doctors and  
company  
stores

the thrifty were ever able to buy at other than company stores, and even the thrifty did not dare to do so. Upon this point my escort laid none of the blame upon the head of the company. "Mr. Pardee," he said, "tells the men to trade where they please, and I believe he means it. But the under-officers managing the different departments work together to make good returns, and when they make them their management isn't criticised." Justly or unjustly, the men were firmly convinced that their jobs were in danger unless they traded with the company. The law passed by the Pennsylvania Legislature for their protection was simply an added grievance. As reported in the papers to calm the agitation, this law, I was told, required that all mine labour should henceforward be paid in cash biweekly. The law did contain this clause, which was all the miners asked for, but it added two words more, so as to read that the miners should be paid in this way "on demand." For any individual miner to demand payment in cash every two weeks was considered equivalent to demanding a discharge and change of residence. The statute left everything as it had been before, except the agitation in the miners' behalf.

As regards the extortions practised by the company stores, I heard few such stories as at the South, save in relation to the one item of powder. What was said about this seemed incredible, but proved to be substantially true. Every miner had to buy his powder of the

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company employing him, and when work was steady a miner, with his assistant, would need half a dozen kegs a month. For this he had to pay \$2.75 a keg, though the powder-mills were willing to furnish it for 96 cents a keg. The extortion, therefore, amounted to over one hundred and fifty per cent., and aggregated something like \$10 a month. To the miners this was a bitter grievance, and I could learn from them no excuse whatever for the frightful overcharge, except that \$2.75 a keg used to be the price of powder back in the seventies. Before I left Hazelton I went to the head of one of the company stores to get his statement. At first he seemed annoyed by the inquiry, but on learning its object said that the price of powder at the mills was now \$1.10 a keg instead of 96 cents, and that the selling price of \$2.75 to the miners was in accordance with an agreement made with their organizations back in the eighties. In the limited time left me I could find no one else who had ever heard of this agreement, and in view of the disorganization of the old miners' unions it seemed that the agreement to maintain this price for powder was entirely an agreement among the companies. To revise it might require a general revision of wages, as this manager suggested; but even in that case the need of revision is imperative. Lower nominal wages would be far less galling to the men than present wages with the patent overcharge for powder constantly exasperating them.

The other overcharges complained of were relatively

insignificant, and I did not take trouble to verify the complaints. They were greatest, however, at the points furthest removed from the competitive stores. Miners' oil, for example, was said to be but 18 cents a gallon in Hazelton, and 40 cents at Harwood. The power of a company store to sell at lower prices than competing stores, because it is sure of its customers and sure of its pay, does not make it an agency for good. Its position corresponds to that of the trusts. It could sell for less than competing firms, but it does sell for more. The owners undoubtedly believe that they demand only reasonable profits, but relatively few men are to be trusted with absolute power to measure their own deserts, and even fewer, perhaps, can act as agents for employers and not let the desire for the favour of those above them lead to indifference to those beneath. The agent can never be as generous as the principal, and the desire to earn his salary from the man who pays him prompts even the conscientious agent to charge all that the traffic will bear. The result is that the company store, instead of being an instrument of co-operation between employer and employed, is an instrument of oppression. So at least the men universally regard it; and if the employers' profits are as little as the employers say, self-interest as well as the desire for the freedom of their employees should prompt them to remove this cause of unceasing antagonism.

But that which was most important in this district

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of immigrant labour was not the economic question how the labourers were treated, but the educational question what was being done to <sup>Eastern Pennsylvania</sup> schools Americanize them. This question interested me more than any other, and led me to devote a good deal of time to visiting the schools. These were in disappointing contrast to the schools of Massachusetts, where the similar problem of Americanizing the French Canadians presented itself. I do not mean that the methods of teaching were inferior. Of these I am no judge, and belong, in fact, to that rapidly lessening class which thinks any method good by which a teacher keeps the pupils alive and makes them understand the subject. The only method that I criticised was that of a young man near Hazelton who attempted to illuminate, or darken, English grammar by explaining that what seemed to be a participle was really a "gerund," and made nothing clear except that he himself did not understand the bit of pedagogical pedantry he was inflicting on his fourteen-year-old scholars. But the methods by which easy things were made difficult for the older scholars were not what depressed the uncritical visitor. Much more serious was the small number of these older scholars, and most serious of all was the appalling number of little children thrust upon the care of a single teacher. It seemed to me that one of the primary teachers had nearly seventy in her care, and most of these knew hardly a word of English when they came to her. In this case



—and in most cases, I am glad to add—the teacher had a great deal of personal refinement, and could have had the best of influence upon the scholars had it been possible for her to be in personal relations with them. But with the swarm that was about her, it was as much as one young woman's strength was good for to maintain fair order during school hours, and I could not blame her for knowing nothing about them in their homes. The schools of eastern Pennsylvania are simply starved by public parsimony.

But the inadequacy of the schools was only one of the influences that kept these Hungarian and Italian communities from becoming a homogeneous element in the Commonwealth. At Lattimer, for example, where the great riot occurred, nearly half of the miners were of English-speaking parentage, but this class of working people had almost as little to do with the Continental immigrants as their employers. There were not, as in Massachusetts, any unions to which all nationalities belonged, and there was not even any political life to bring about fusion and the interchange of ideas. The whole place belonged to the coal company, and nearly everybody who had been naturalized voted with the management. There seemed to be no industrial agitation. The men down in the mines worked ten hours a day, as against the eight hours customary in England and demanded by the miners' unions here. But I heard nothing said in criticism of these hours, even from the men who

Other  
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izing in-  
fluences

spoke to me quite freely of the higher wages that used to be in vogue. The work in the subterranean shafts seemed dangerous as well as hard, yet there was no required system of insurance, and apparently no talk of any. When an accident occurred, the manager told me, the company took care of the families that had no one to support them until these families were able to care for themselves. But this care, he assured me, was given as a favour, and not because of any legal obligation. The rents asked by the company seemed distinctly moderate. Often it was merely a ground-rent, and some of the thrifty immigrants had not only put up shanties for their own families, but added room on room to sublet to others at immoderate rentals. One old Pole, whose house or caravansary I was taken through, must have had fifteen rooms to his rambling structure, and perhaps half a dozen tenant families, to say nothing of their boarders. Yet even this "landlord" was little more than a tenant-at-will, and the company could practically have cut off his rentals had it cared to enforce its extreme legal rights. In fact, the whole relationship was feudal, and while in some respects there was good government, notably in the absence of saloons, there was little approach to self-government. Down in the mines I saw no child-labour, but on the "breakers"—picking out the slate from the coal as it was washed and sorted—many of the little boys seemed to me hardly more than eleven or twelve. Again I recalled my pleasure in finding

that the Massachusetts factory laws and compulsory education laws were keeping all the children in school until they were fourteen, and I felt that conditions in Pennsylvania were in sad contrast with those in New England. In fact, it seemed singular that the demand for the restriction of immigration should be so strong in New England, where the Americanizing process was so rapid, and so weak in Pennsylvania, where the Americanizing process was so slow; but it was all a part, probably, of the greater popular awakening in New England. There were, however, a great many hopeful signs even here at Lattimer. One of the officials of the company who made a fine impression upon me spoke of himself as an Irishman, yet not only did this official bear no mark of alien lineage, but the Irish workmen as well seemed to be thoroughly American. The general manager, in speaking of the race problem, laughed as he recalled the times in which they used to hold the "Molly Maguires" in terror, and recalled also the justification of this terror in the drunken sprees of some of the Irish immigrants. All this had passed away, and the Irish element was in every way identified with the American. A similar change had begun among the Huns and Italians. The dismal lodgings, such as had impressed me at Shenandoah a dozen years before, were confined to the more recent immigrants. One picture that stands out in my mind typifies the change that is going on in the best of the immigrant families. It came to me when

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I had missed my way to the little schoolhouse in the foreign quarter, and was stared at by uncouth alien faces as I thought to renew my inquiry. Just then a neatly dressed young married woman with an Italian face of real beauty came out from one of the better houses not far from me, and I turned toward her to ask my question. She answered it pleasantly in the best of English, and I could not help prolonging the conversation to learn how long she had been in this country. She said that she had come over a child of seven and had lived here ever since, getting her education in the district schools that had seemed to me so inadequate. Apparently her opportunities had been in no way exceptional save for her American education, and yet in manner as well as face she seemed of a different order from the women about her. As I turned from her to go to the school, Lowell's apostrophe to our country recurred to me: "She that lifts up the manhood of the poor." The work of raising the manhood and womanhood of the immigrants from other lands is progressing more slowly, perhaps, among the mining regions of Pennsylvania than anywhere else in the country, but even here progress is being made.

## VII


### THE IRON CENTRES

THE first part of my visit to the iron district about Pittsburg might easily be turned into a chapter of "Triumphant Democracy." Indeed, there <sup>Triumphant</sup> ~~democracy~~ is no chapter in Mr. Carnegie's book that records industrial triumphs equal to those in his own mills. On the mechanical side they were far more impressive than the machinery exhibits at the Chicago Exposition, and there was absolutely nothing at Chicago that compared with them in depicting the superiority of American to European methods of production. Nor was this superiority merely spectacular. In talking with the managers I found that the fear of European competition was a thing of the past. They were all, so far as I know, protectionists; but their protectionism had none of the insistent quality that was to have been expected in the old citadel of that creed. It was almost like the bimetallism of Colorado bankers. They believed that it was for the good of the country, but they had no need of it in their own industry. A large part of their product they were selling abroad, and their president told me that they

could sell the whole of it—or about three-fifths of the entire steel product of Pennsylvania—in foreign markets, if they cared to do so. The English price of rails was \$22 a ton. The cost of transporting rails to England was over \$5 a ton; yet they were able to overleap this barrier of transportation charges and sell their steel in the London market. Instead of needing a tariff to protect them against English competition, they were able to pay a tariff of twenty-five per cent. *ad valorem* to the railroad and shipping interests in order to enter into competition with the English on their own ground.

Such triumphs for American industry are not, indeed, peculiar to the Carnegie works. When I had visited the iron-works in the South, I had found that they, too, were making heavy <sup>Protection</sup>~~needless~~ shipments abroad; and a week later, when talking with an extremely accurate as well as fair-minded official of the Illinois Steel Company, I learned that the great competitor of the Carnegie Company was able to pay the freight charges from Illinois to Belgium and still undersell the Belgians. The statement of the case made by the Illinois official was peculiarly compact. In the Belgian works, he told me, the average wages are less than 75 cents a day. In the Illinois works the average wages are in the neighbourhood of \$1.75 a day. Yet the product of the Illinois works could be sold in Belgium for less than the product of Belgian works. I did not have an opportunity to visit the

Illinois works, or I would probably have seen paralleled the sights that impressed me so much at Homestead and Braddock. But at the Pennsylvania works it did not require an acute observer to see the reason for these triumphs of American methods and American men. Everything seemed to be done by machinery. In the Southern iron-works great numbers of negroes were employed with wheelbarrows to carry heavy loads of fuel or ore or metal from one place to another; but in the Carnegie works there was a great network of overhead tracks, on which nearly everything could be shifted in any direction by steam. And the steam itself was often generated in boilers heated by the gas that came from the coke and ore used in making the steel. As you looked about the great buildings, that which was memorable was the human solitude in which these activities were carried on. Works covering acres, and costing in the neighbourhood of a million dollars, would have hardly a hundred men scattered about them. Unfortunately, I had never seen European iron-works, so that an exact comparison was impossible. But when I thought of the swarming of men in every European industry I had seen, and even when I thought of the relative swarming in the iron-works in the South, I felt sure that where there was only one employee for something like ten thousand dollars of capital in these Carnegie works, there would be nearly ten employees in most parts of Europe. The contrast was mainly due, of course, to the fact that the dearness



of labour about Pittsburg forced the introduction of costly machinery to economize it. But this machinery would not have proved an economy had not this dear labour been highly skilled and able to bear heavy responsibility during the long hours. The light-eating, heavy-drinking, apathetic labour of Continental Europe could not have been intrusted with this strenuous work. My escort explained to me, indeed, that nearly all the work was simple, but he recognised that in many of the positions a moment's inattention or the slightest error in judgment would cost the works incomparably more than the man's wages. In its nervous intensity the work was hard, and where it was hardest, in the sense of involving the greatest responsibility, the men in charge were almost uniformly American—or at least English-speaking. The irresponsible work was largely in the hands of the Huns and Poles, and of the negroes, who, like them, had been kept down by centuries of oppression. The superiority of American workmen, therefore, as well as the superiority of American methods, was at the basis of this triumph of American industry.

It was obvious, however, that the triumphs were chiefly due to the management, and I therefore learned with the greatest interest the plan upon <sup>A Napo-  
leonic re-</sup> which the allied works were organized. The <sup>public</sup> allied plants included nearly every industry essential to the production of steel, from the firing of the coke-ovens to the operation of a railroad. At the head of



nearly every department was a man who had been taken into the firm because of his business promise, and who was paid according to the profits of the works under him. Each of these heads of departments was also given an interest in the company, and thus a quality of work was secured which mere salaries would not bring. No one connected with the management except Mr. Carnegie himself, said President Schwab, of the Steel Company, had ever invested a dollar. The company was really a partnership rather than a corporation, and not one of the partners held his position by reason of inheritance or wealth. Only three of the thirty-three heads of departments were even graduates of technical schools or colleges, and one of the superintendents had been a common machinist only a few years ago. The whole organization recalled Napoleon's definition of a republic when he said that the French Revolution meant "a career open to talent of every sort."

All that I saw of the management of the company carried out this idea. I was surprised, indeed, at the number of young men who had forged their way to the top. But talent has as little regard for the lines of age as for those of caste. Ability to do the work was evidently the prime requisite, and while the men at the heads of the departments had too much social finish to permit the supposition that many of them had risen from the ranks of workmen, it was evident that their weekly luncheon together was


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Restored  
feudalism

planned for its business suggestiveness and not for social diversion. A similar impression was made by the superintendents about the works. In fact, during the two days that I was under the escort of the men in charge, I received but one unfavourable impression. This came from the spirit in which the workmen did their work. They were cheerless almost to the point of sullenness. When the men looked at us it was rarely with the look of pride in their work or contentment with their wages or cordial feeling toward those over them; yet the work was full of responsibility, the wages were high, and the managers singularly efficient. The sullen attitude, indeed, was absolutely intangible, and when my escort said that he had not observed it, there was really nothing that I could point to as evidence. When, however, I left the circle of those who could explain the works, and took my lodgings in the town of Homestead, where the workmen would explain themselves, I found that the impression I had gained was the only one that had been possible. I had now entered an entirely different realm. Here the atmosphere was at times heavy with disappointment and hopelessness. Some of the men seemed afraid to talk. Even the Catholic priest—to whose class I am accustomed to go for fair statements of the relations of men to their employers—was unwilling to make any statement. The absence of freedom resembled that of the small mining villages in the eastern part of the State. It was in sharp contrast with the independence of the

old trade-union towns in Massachusetts, or even of the new factory towns in the South where the relations between employers and employed are still cordial. If all that I saw while with the managers of the Carnegie works might be described under the title of "Triumphant Democracy," nearly all that I saw while with the men might be described under the title of "Feudalism Restored."

One of the first men whom I found to talk with was the famous Hugh O'Donnell, who was the spokesman of the strikers at the time of the Homestead riots and during the long strike that followed. He was not living in Homestead, but had just returned from the East for a visit of a day or two with his mother. He told me that the Carnegie managers had made it impossible for him to get work from any steel company in the country. That he could not get such work was obvious, for since the strike he had been making his living much of the time as a reporter, though he was an expert roller—and rollers, the managers assured me, still receive nearly \$200 a month for their critical work of exploding the "scale" that forms about the steel and measuring with absolute accuracy the beams, rails, etc., that are made. The leader of the great labour war of seven years ago was still a man considerably under forty. His face was handsome and his speech unusually ready. He did not, however, impress me with the reserve power of a born leader. He knew little about present conditions



at Homestead, except the belief of his friends and sympathizers that a low and dishonourable class of people had come to take the strikers' places. On this point I learned from unbiassed people that he greatly exaggerated the extent of the change, though from his standpoint, of course—as from that of Mr. Carnegie a few years before—all workmen were dishonourable who had broken the commandment, “Thou shalt not take thy neighbour's job.” What O'Donnell knew most about was the history of the great strike, and I naturally went over with him the claims of the management respecting it. These were, in brief, that the fight had been made, not to reduce wages, but to effect “a sensible classification,” and that the trade-union had not only resisted such a classification, but had demanded the right to appoint the foremen. As to the first of these claims, O'Donnell, without hesitation, admitted that there was a good deal of truth in it. The union, he said, made a mistake in resisting a new classification. It was inevitable, because of the changing methods of production. Under the old system the roller was practically an independent contractor, receiving so much for every ton, and often receiving exorbitant pay when better machinery increased the output. Under the new system he was reduced to a mere wage-earner under a general superintendent for a whole division. The new classification, therefore, was largely a dethronement of the rollers, but, as is always the case, the best-paid men were also

the best organized, and most ready to strike for their claims. They led in the strike, and the men receiving lower pay followed, until both were disastrously defeated, and the last vestige of trades-unionism in the Carnegie works was destroyed. The defeat, said O'Donnell, was practically inevitable, because other iron centres were already disorganized. The union might have given in, but the hostile attitude of the management towards the union practically forced the strike. As to the charge that the union had demanded the right to appoint the foremen—Mr. O'Donnell met President Schwab's statement with a flat denial. There was no truth in it whatever, he said. The Knights of Labour might somewhere have made such a demand, but no trade-union had ever done so. Between the conflicting statements there seemed no possibility of harmony, except on the supposition that the union's criticism of particular foremen had seemed to the management equivalent to an assertion of the right to appoint.

On the question of wages also there was difficulty, such as I experienced nowhere else, in harmonizing the statements of employers and employed.

Old wages  
and new During the previous seven weeks of my journey the employers had agreed pretty closely with the employed in reporting reductions in wages since 1892. In the cotton-mills of New England the cut had been twenty per cent.; on the cotton-fields of the South and among the carpenters and masons of

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Southern cities it had been nearly forty per cent. The only great industry in which there had been no cut had been among the anthracite-coal miners, and here the employers agreed with the employed in reporting a fearful reduction in the number of days the men worked. When, however, I reached the Carnegie works, where the great Homestead strike had taken place, I was surprised to be told at the office that average wages were actually higher than six years before. When, however, I went among the workmen, I found that the truth of this statement was indignantly denied. They admitted that wages were higher in the Carnegie works than anywhere else in the country. All the other steel-works, said one of them, must pay lower wages in order to compete. But when they came to compare present wages with those before the strike and the depression, they asserted that sweeping reductions had taken place. These reductions, however, were relatively light among the lower grades of labour. For example, a young fellow in the engineers' department, whom I met the first evening, told me that the common workmen, who used to get \$1.40 for ten hours, now get \$1.32; while the engineers, who used to get from \$1.90 to \$2.75, now get from \$1.70 to \$2.25. The heavy reductions complained of were among the men doing the most responsible work—especially among the rollers. One assistant in this department gave me a detailed statement of the changes, which ran as follows: "The man who had

my job," he said, "used to get 19 cents a ton, when the capacity [output] was supposed to be forty tons a day, but we often ran to eighty. From 19 cents the first cut was to  $5\frac{1}{2}$  cents, and the next to  $4\frac{1}{2}$ . Then there was a ten per cent. raise. Now it is down again. Since the beginning of the year it has been about 4 cents. The capacity is now 120 tons." The roller, he went on, used to get 22 cents a ton net, and now gets approximately  $5\frac{1}{2}$  cents. If these statements were accurate, then men who used to get from \$7.60 to \$8.80 a day, or even more, now get from \$4.80 to \$6.60. I noted that the present wages of the rollers agreed with the employers' estimate of \$200 a month if the rollers worked every day, and also that the old wages above referred to were no higher than the Carnegies claimed to be paying at the time of the strike. But otherwise there was no harmony between this man's statement and that of his employers. Inasmuch as his manner seemed as judicial as theirs, and only ceased to be so when he got to talking about the black hatred of the men for the despotism over them, I determined to learn what unprejudiced town people thought about the matter.

Among the merchants I thought that I observed somewhat the same absence of free speech as existed among the working people. However, among those who had been in business before the strike, there was not the least diversity of opinion about the severe reduction of wages. The

What the  
merchants  
said

first one I talked with put the case in darker colours than the workmen. "Where we used to sell \$2500 worth of furniture in a single month, we now sometimes barely sell \$100 worth." When it became evident that the small shopkeepers took the same view as the workmen, I went to a man of wealth, whose sympathies were certain to be with the company, and whose knowledge of savings-bank and real-estate matters made his opinions of exceptional value. His statement of the case was singularly judicial, and to me was convincing. The local merchants, he said, were apt to exaggerate the losses of their customers, because cheap trolley connection with Pittsburg caused a great deal of the buying to be done there. Nevertheless, it was perfectly clear to any one doing business in Homestead that the men were not getting as much money as formerly. He could not understand how any one could suppose that they were.

But it was not the lowering of wages that caused the most bitter complaints among the men. Their wages, even when lowered, were not low, and most of them realized it. Their real griev- <sup>The real</sup> grievances were the long hours, the Sunday labour, the strain under which they were compelled to work, and, above all—or rather at the basis of all—the want of freedom to organize. Nobody in Homestead dared openly to join a trade-union. The president said, without reserve, that he would discharge any man for this offence, and the men all understood that this was



the foundation principle of the present order. So far as I could see, no secret union had yet grown up. The men who spoke most bitterly about the prohibition of unions said nothing to intimate that they themselves were still members. The union movement, to all appearances, was dead except in the hopes of the workmen. The management, I afterwards learned, believed that it was dead even here, and that most of the men were glad to have the union outlawed; but I saw nothing to support this view. Some of the men I met did not wish to be connected with trades-unions. But there was not one of them but regarded the loss of the right to organize as a restriction of freedom.

There was one man with whom I spent a great deal of time who almost personified the cause of unionism. An "old" man at forty His name was Tom Crawford, and he was one of the most likeable men I met on my journey. He had been at the head of the Advisory Committee during the strike, and it was evident that he, rather than O'Donnell, must have had the real direction of affairs. He had been born in England, and felt somewhat keenly his want of schooling—though it is doubtful if schooling would have developed his executive ability more than the postgraduate course he had been compelled to take. "I have always," he said, "hoped to educate myself, but, after my day's work, I haven't been able to do much studying. . . . After working twelve hours, how can a man go to a library?" Curiously enough, but typically

enough, he spoke of himself as "getting too old now," though he was just thirty-six. I expressed my dissent from this view, but he replied, "I don't know any roller over forty. If I can keep it up four years longer, I shall own my house, and be able to quit independently. . . . I have known old rollers, but they are all gone. . . . An old man cannot be anything but a sweeper." This observation agreed pretty well with what I myself had seen in the mills, and, when I referred to it in talking with the official of the Illinois Steel Company, a week later, he practically confirmed it. It is possible, therefore, that the "increase of production" that seems to come from men working twelve hours a day is more than lost through enforced idleness at middle age. Moderate work until fifty-five might produce more material goods—as well as healthier and better men—than excessive work till even forty-five, followed by a protracted old age of partial idleness and frequent dependence.

Both Tom Crawford and the Illinois Steel Company's official believed that in the iron-mills work is becoming harder as time goes on. It is not, however, requiring more intelligence. Both men believed that, with the new machinery, less skill is needed, but closer attention. "We used to be able," said Mr. Crawford, "to take time to eat our meals like civilized human beings, but now we can only snatch up a bite as we work. . . . Last Friday, when my assistant sloped on account of trouble he got

Work growing harder and hours longer

into, and I had a green hand to help me, I wasn't able for twelve hours to get from my post an instant, for any purpose." Both of these men also believed that the hours were being lengthened. The Illinois Steel Company official said that the twelve-hour day was always usual in blast-furnaces, but that the eight-hour day was formerly common in steel-works. Now the twelve-hour day is almost universal in this country, though the eight-hour day is universal in England. Crawford's statement was virtually the same, and the reason he assigned for the establishment of the twelve-hour day here as contrasted with the eight-hour day in England was the general defeat of unionism here, contrasted with its triumph in Great Britain.

Crawford was not employed by the Carnegie Company, and therefore was able to speak freely in favour of unionism. He, too, went over with me  
 Sunday labour      the struggles of 1892, and told of his arrest and imprisonment on the charge of homicide and treason. In his case the imprisonment lasted but a single night—a hotel-keeper whom he did not know having gone on his bail, with the remark, "That man's face is good enough for me." During the one night of imprisonment, however, he could not sleep at all, because the prison bed was foul with vermin. "I have always worked for a living," he said, "but we have kept clean." As I looked about the parlour, I felt that his pride on this point was fully justified. The story that followed was of less interest than his

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comments upon present grievances. The chief grievance was the length of the hours; but the feature of the long hours complained of most bitterly was the Sunday labour. "Even the blast-furnaces," he said, "could be coked down, if the managers wished it; and if the mills would close at one o'clock on Saturday, as they do in England, there would be no need of Sunday repairing. . . . If the Evangelical Alliance, that is trying to get the mills to run less on Sunday, would apply to some of the workmen, they would find that we want to work on Sunday less than the managers say. . . . I don't believe in Sunday work. It is against the law of the land and against the law of God. The man who gives the people libraries and compels them to work on Sundays is false." This feeling against Sunday labour, which was so strong in Crawford, seemed to be general. One of the first Irishmen I talked with spoke of the increase of Sunday labour as a result of the overthrow of unionism. "The union," he said, "always restricted Sunday work." Still another workman spoke of the complete disappearance of the old rule of double pay for Sunday work. Since the union's disappearance it was rare to have even "time and a half" allowed for Sunday work. As I heard these complaints about Sunday labour I was reminded of the fact that western Pennsylvania is the stronghold of Presbyterianism, and I was glad to see that the Calvinistic faith which gave Anglo-Saxon workmen their free Sunday was here an

influence in behalf of the Celt, the German, and the Hun.

No town I have ever visited observed Sunday much better than Homestead. It is emphatically a town of saloons. Yet on Sunday not a single saloon among the many I passed bore the faintest sign of being open. My own "hotel" was merely a saloon and restaurant, with a few bedrooms on the second story. Yet, when I returned to it at noon on Sunday, and again when I returned about five o'clock, I was absolutely unable to get in. The proprietor had gone off for the day, his son had gone off, and both the servants had followed their example. At noon I was able to get a lunch elsewhere, but when I returned toward evening and was unable to wash and dress in preparation for dinner with an officer of the company, I felt that Sunday closing in Homestead was perhaps a trifle too effectual. In the main, Homestead was an unattractive town, but its enforcement of Sunday laws was far from being its only hopeful feature. The private houses—except the shanties on the company grounds occupied by the strike-breakers in 1892—were much better than those of the mining towns, and the schools were in the happiest possible contrast. The buildings were good and the teachers competent. The high-school attendance was small, it is true, for a place of five thousand people—hardly a quarter what it would be in New England or the West—but in the grammar grades there was no thinning out

The town  
of Home-  
stead

because of child labour in the works. Child labour was unknown at Homestead, and even the Hungarians were apt to keep their children in school longer than the law required. In one of the schools I visited there was a well-conducted manual-training course, established by the generosity of President Schwab; at the mills there were weekly chemistry classes conducted by mill officials; and in their homes a goodly number of boys were pursuing scientific courses under the Scranton School of Correspondence. This school is widely advertised, and some of its agents allow themselves to promise far too much to the boys who follow its curriculum; but what I saw and heard of its workings convinced me that it was really a great educational institution. Everybody whose judgment I trusted said that the papers sent back to the school by the pupils were criticised by first-class men, and that the boys were not only well guided, but kept interested in their work. Some of the workmen I talked with were inclined to ridicule the boast of the officials that workmen could rise from the ranks. When I referred to the superintendent who had been a common machinist a few years before, they told me that he was Mr. Carnegie's cousin. A workman could not rise, they said, unless he toadied to the management. Yet all this pessimism about what a workingman could do did not involve hopelessness about the future of a workingman's children. The boy who, after twelve hours in the mill, had the grit to do good work in the corre-

spondence school was in the line of promotion, and the exceptional boy who could not only follow drawings, but manage men, might become foreman or even superintendent. Besides the schools there were the libraries established by Mr. Carnegie. The one in the beautiful building at Homestead was hardly in working order at the time of my visit, but the work that was being done at Braddock showed me what it would accomplish. At Braddock the library supplied books to as many persons as there were families in the city, while the lecture-hall in the library building together with the swimming-bath, the billiard-rooms, etc., seemed to afford the residents all the advantages of a lyceum, a gymnasium, and a club-house. The terms upon which these advantages were offered were of the most nominal description—one dollar for three months to employees and two dollars to others. The library was free to all. I had appreciated Tom Crawford's sarcasm about the offer of these privileges to men who worked twelve hours a day, but they certainly seemed of immense advantage to the families of the workmen, if not to the workmen themselves.


All that I saw at Homestead convinced me that Mr. Carnegie was unusually sincere in his desire for the welfare of his employees. President McKinley is not more so in his desire for the welfare of Luzon. But the fatal defect which Mr. Carnegie observes in the President's policy in the Philippines permeates his own policy at Homestead.

Mr. Car-  
negie's  
imperialism

The government at Homestead aims to be government for the people, but its fundamental principle is that there shall be no government by the people. He who joins an organization of the employees at Homestead to resist the absolute supremacy of the employers is warned in advance that he can accomplish nothing except his own ruin. This policy is not, indeed, that which Mr. Carnegie employed when he was directly in charge. In an unusual degree he sympathized with the organization of the men for self-government. But the imperialist policy in its most absolute lines is the one pursued and avowed by the present head of the Carnegie company. Charles M. Schwab, by reason of his ability and convictions, quite as much as by reason of the position he occupies, is probably the foremost representative of those who would extirpate every tendency toward industrial democracy. It was my pleasure to have a long talk with him after my talk with some of the union sympathizers at Homestead, and I never heard unionism so vigorously dealt with. Furthermore, the position he took was one that had the support of his conscience as well as of his interests. He believed that complete individual independence was the only method of developing strong manhood, and his hostility to trades-unions—because they undermined individual responsibility—extended to all fraternal organizations. He did not, indeed, oppose corporations—in which all the stockholders agree to act as a unit according to the decision of the majority;




but when I asked him about trusts, I found that he was nearly as hostile to them as to the labour unions, and that his reasons were almost identical. The trust, he said, made its individual members look to artificial prices for their profits, instead of looking to improvements in their own methods of production. Sooner or later the artificial prices stimulated outside competition, which forced the pool to collapse and left its members worse off than if they had never joined it. The trades-unions, he thought, had a like effect upon the workmanship of their members. Their tendency to restrict apprentices was thoroughly hostile to the public welfare, and their arbitrary rules embarrassed the introduction of machinery. When I asked him whether he had ever known trades-unions to strike against improved machinery, he said that he had not known them to do so in this country, but that it had happened in England, and that the power of the English unions was causing the decay of manufacturing in England. I referred, naturally, to the decades of unfulfilled prophecy that the trades-unions would have this influence upon English industry, and questioned whether the present forebodings would be justified. He assured me, in reply, that in the iron industry the decline was already apparent, and that German iron-works, as well as American, were rapidly gaining on their English competitors. A brilliant future awaited the German works, and a dismal one the English, because the German works were not hampered by the



unions, while the English were simply in their fetters. If the iron industry in America was to go forward, it, too, must be free.


The arraignment of trades-unionism was little short of brilliant until President Schwab turned to conditions in Homestead. Even here he showed how thoroughly he was convinced of the righteousness of his policy. The great body of the employees, he said, were glad to have the unions suppressed. In support of this view he cited the report of an English expert who had been given permission to go through the mills and talk with the men at their work. When I queried whether a census taken in this way was reliable, he stated that during the Homestead strike two hundred of his hands at Braddock had sent in their names, offering to go to Homestead, open the mills, and crush the strike. To me this offer of workingmen to incur the hatred of their fellows seemed evidence of servility, but to him it was evidence that non-union men were glad to help overthrow unionism. The discontent that I had found he believed to be exceptional. He did not believe that hours had been lengthened or Sunday work increased, and he was sure that the books of the company showed that the average wages were higher in 1893 than in 1892, in 1894 than in 1893, in 1895 than in 1894, and so on, advancing with each succeeding year. In short, he was convinced that the suppression of the union had been a benefit to the employees as well as to the company, and he was therefore prepared,



for the good of the governed, to suppress with an iron hand any attempt on their part at self-government.

After this talk with President Schwab I had another day in Homestead, and I spent a good part of it among members of the middle classes, in an attempt to harmonize the conflicting statements of employers and workingmen. As regards the contentment of the employees, I found nothing to justify the optimism of the officials. The ablest and broadest man I met—a young Baptist minister who had once been a coke-burner, and who still knew as much about the lives of labourers as he did about the higher criticism—told me that he had to make it his mission to give the men all the encouragement he could, and keep them from thinking about their grievances, though he believed that many of these were real enough. The discontent and discouragement prevalent made the men sceptical and bitter. The more I heard upon this point, the more I was convinced that the officials were too far removed from their employees to know anything about their sentiments. As regards wages, the singular contradiction in statements was finally explained. I was talking with an old clerk in the Carnegie works, and the warmth with which he praised the chemistry classes conducted by the officials led me to expect from him a repetition of the official statement about wages. When I asked him about this matter, however, his view proved to be that of the men; and when I spoke

of the reported increase, he said that the books of the company showed an increase since 1892, but only because a day's work was so frequently reckoned at twelve hours instead of eight, and because the men in 1892 had lost five months on account of the strike. As regards the extent to which hours had been lengthened and Sunday work increased, I gradually reached the conclusion that the officials had underestimated it much less than the partisans of the union had overestimated it. Even here, however, while the old unionists exaggerated their losses, they were quite right in thinking that the death of unionism would mean the death of all hope of a future shortening of hours. Legislation might accomplish the reduction, but legislation of value to workingmen is rarely secured except when powerful organizations of workingmen demand its enactment and compel its enforcement. Acting as individuals without organization, the workmen are helpless. Every man among them may be convinced that shorter hours and a free Sunday are for the good of his class, but no man among them will cut his own wages and risk his own job unless assured that his fellows will co-operate. You might almost as well attempt to run the Government by permitting each citizen to contribute what he pleases, as attempt to advance the general interests of labour by permitting each workman to contribute what he pleases. The bulk of men are willing to do their share, but require assurance that others will do theirs. This assurance



of co-operation can come only through organization. So long as the organization of iron-workers is prohibited, the exhausting and demoralizing twelve-hour day and Sunday labour are bound to remain. Trades-unions have their features of danger, as I was shortly to see in studying the labour movement in Chicago, but the prohibition of trades-unions, as exemplified at Homestead, leaves the working classes without the hope of a better future.

## VIII

### THE TRADES-UNION MOVEMENT IN CHICAGO

FORTUNATELY, the first trades-union leader I talked with in Chicago had been a union man in England, and was able to compare the English unions with the American. The contrast made was singularly sharp. "The trades-union leaders in England," he said, "are, as a rule, superior to those in America, but the rank and file of union men in this country are superior to those in England." It was Douglas Wilson, of the International Machinists, who said this; and when he explained the situation, the sharp contrast, that seemed a paradox, was seen to be the inevitable summary.

"Generally," said Mr. Wilson, "they have trained men at the head of the English unions. Many of them are Scotchmen, whose families have partly educated them for the ministry or the law, but who have been forced to go to work because funds have given out, or something of that sort." These men, he went on, can never hope to become professional men. The only field for their ambitions is in their union. They can rarely even go into business for themselves.

"Business in England is all run in old grooves, and it is hard for a new firm to start." Political openings are also relatively rare. Therefore the brightest men remain in the ranks of labour, become leaders, and are "kept in office by their unions year after year."

The contrast between these conditions and those in America hardly needs to be stated. The trades-unions in America are constantly losing at the top. Not only are the ablest members constantly going into business—as employing printers, cigar-makers, carpenters, and the like—but the officials are constantly receiving political appointments or entering the professions. Only a day or two after my talk with Mr. Wilson I had the pleasure of meeting a brilliant young editor of the *Chicago Record*, Mr. Sikes, who a few years ago graduated from the University of Minnesota, President of his class, and President of the Minneapolis printers' union. When Mr. Wilson spoke of the trades-union officials entering different professions in this country, I naturally recalled that two of my own acquaintances in New York had studied law while at the head of their unions. "There are others," he remarked significantly, showing me a law book in his desk.

Nothing further was needed to explain the often boasted superiority of the English trades-union leaders, and a few more words made equally clear the general superiority of American trades-union members—among whom hope and ambition are common possessions. "The trouble with Ameri-

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can trades-unions," said Mr. Wilson, "is that nearly everybody thinks he is able to run a union, and therefore criticises and forms combinations against the men who are in." Pretty soon the present officials are ousted, and new ones are installed, who in turn give place to others. In this way the management of American trades-unions suffers from the constant changes of officials, just as the management of American district schools suffers from the constant changes of teachers; but the general intelligence of American unions gains by the rotation, just as the general intelligence of American school districts is increased by the fact that often a third of the families contain some member who has taught school. But the changes in the management of American unions form the smallest part of the ferment here that is lacking in the old country. "In England," said Mr. Wilson, "there are men who carry the same union card and number that their grandfathers carried. Here nobody belongs to the same union as his father, and few fathers expect their sons to have even the same trade as themselves. In England the union is a religion. . . . Women will go to the grogeries on pay-day to get from their husbands money to keep up the dues to the union." This last remark led up to another contrast between English and American unionists. "Here," he said, "nearly every man shows up the morning after pay-day, but there lots of the men used to have a 'blue' Tuesday as well as Monday. They say it is better



now, but when I was there, the workman who didn't drink beer was laughed at. I remember that when one young fellow was converted, and stopped drinking, an old Yorkshireman said of him, 'He used to be a good workman, but he is naw workman now.' . . . There is enough drinking here, but it is hardly to be compared with the drinking there, where women as well as men go to the 'public' and booze." Before he had finished on this theme he had made graphic the official statistics showing that English working people drink more than twice as much as American. When summed up, the whole contrast between English and American unions followed closely the lines of the contrast between English and American society. If the organization that is best administered is best, the scorn of our English critics may be justified; but if the organization that has the best manhood is best, American unionists may smile at Sidney Webb.

What Mr. Wilson said about English and American unions was only a small part of our conversation.

With a frankness that a weaker man or weaker trades-unionist would not have ventured, he went over with me nearly the whole field of trades-union policy. When I criticised the union rules regarding apprentices, he shrewdly replied that "lawyers and doctors will not allow men to practise who haven't served an apprenticeship," and urged that unions had the same right to protect their trades against "incompetent men." He did not, however,


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attempt to deny that selfishness was at the bottom of the regulations. When I questioned him about the trades-union hostility toward machinery, he not only admitted the truth of President Schwab's charge that English unions sometimes struck against new machinery, but stated that he had known American unions to do the same. The coopers, he said, had a long strike against machines for making barrels, and it was finally compromised by allowing machines to be used in making certain barrels and not in making others. The cigar-makers had had similar strikes. These strikes he did not attempt to defend. He believed that opposition to machinery was short-sighted. "The more intelligent unions," he said, "especially in trades where a great deal of machinery is used, accept it as inevitable." He fully recognised, however, the fact that trades-unions were as likely as other organizations to put the employment of their own members above the public good. Their hostility to machinery was on all fours with the manufacturers' hostility to unhampered commerce with manufacturing countries.

Mr. Wilson, as an advocate of trades-unions, would only admit that they shared in the general selfishness of class organizations; but there were not wanting labour leaders who denounced unions <sup>The socialist attack</sup> as criminal. These labour allies of extreme capitalism were uniformly advocates of extreme Socialism. It was my fate while in Chicago to meet almost as many Socialists as trades-unionists, and the enmity

shown between them would have been little short of a revelation to those who condemn in the same breath unionism and Socialism. Two days after my talk with Mr. Wilson I had a long talk with one of the Socialist leaders, who went over with me the feud between his party and the "pure and simple" unionists who exclude partisan political action from the trades-union's programme. Formerly he had been a trades-union leader. During the seventies, he said, he and his sympathizers obtained the control of the Chicago Trade and Labour Assembly, and by their influence in the unions organized a workingmen's party with a Socialist programme. In 1876 they polled 4000 votes, and by 1879 had gradually increased their voting strength to 12,000. "Then," he said, "the Knights of Labour were admitted into the Assembly with fifteen delegates, solidly Democratic. In a year we had to quit the Assembly, but before quitting we carried a motion using up all the funds in the treasury to help a local strike. The German unions seceded with us, and we organized the Central Labour Union." This body, he explained, remained the champion of Socialism until the Anarchists got control, when "we Socialists were driven out." During all these years there had been intense hatred between the Socialist and the conservative unions. "Members of German unions have come to me with their heads broken," said this Socialist (who is now a lawyer), "and asked me to prosecute their assailants, the 'entertainment com-



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mittee' of the Building Trades Council. I have offered to stand the racket if they would, but they have always backed down for fear of further violence. . . . The 'entertainment committee' has a lot of thugs, and their favourite method of getting rid of non-unionists is by slugging. . . . The courts are quite right when they say that violence is a necessary part of a strike. Unless it is supported by violence a strike is of no use."

An evening or two later I attended a Socialist meeting, and met several of the leaders of the Debs faction. Their hostility toward trades-unionism was more moderate, and one of them spoke <sup>Extremes meet</sup> patronizingly of trades-unions as "kindergartens" in Socialism. But they were all contemptuous of trades-union aims and methods. None of them saw in trades-unions the beginning of the democratic control of industry, and all regarded strikes as a futile weapon. In their speeches more attention was given to belittling the reforms advocated by conservative unionists than to attacking the aggressions of capitalism. Nothing but ridicule, for example, was accorded to the belief that falling prices were at the bottom of the business stagnation and the growth of "the army of the unemployed." It was "over-production," said the principal speaker, and he quoted at length the statistics of capitalistic writers exaggerating the recent economies due to machinery. Only when he came to his remedy did this extreme Socialist break with the extreme con-

servatives. He believed, with logical consistency, that unemployment must continue to increase until public ownership increased consumption to keep pace with the increase in production. It was not easy to see how any one who believed that over-production caused hard times could have answered him. On the question of trusts, also, these Socialists were in remarkable accord with the extreme conservatives. The trust manipulators themselves could hardly paint in brighter colours the economies of consolidation, or express greater scorn of attempts to stay the course of combinations. Only on the remote question of the ultimate remedy did the Socialists break with the reactionaries, by declaring that the control of industry by the public was the only possible outcome of control by monopoly. As I listened to the speeches I realized as never before that on all the immediate economic issues—trades-unionism, bimetallism, and monopoly—the extremes of Socialism and capitalism supported one another.

When I went to the headquarters of the building-trades unions—one of the few places in Chicago where it was easy for me to meet working people—I naturally talked over the criticisms of the Socialists. It was no surprise to find that the hatred expressed by the Socialists was returned by the unionists. "The Socialist unions," I was told, "aren't unions at all. They are just a lot of scabs that belong to the Socialist party. . . . All that they

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try to do is to break down real trades-unions." "But," I inquired, "how about the charge that your 'entertainment committee' breaks open the heads of non-union workmen who attempt to take your jobs?" "Perfect nonsense," "All a lie," were the first answers; but when the conversation continued as to the work of the "entertainment committee," it was admitted that when the committee waited on non-unionists it might sometimes "threaten to fix them, just for a bluff," and that "in case of a quarrel somebody might get his head punched." By this time it was easy enough to see that the Socialist charges had not been made out of whole cloth, and that while the unions formally opposed terrorism because it made them unpopular with all classes, there were plenty of unionists who had more faith in violence than in fair play. I afterwards learned from a former unionist, who was still in sympathy with unionism, that cases of "slugging" were frequent in the building trades a few years ago—the guilty unionists being uniformly pardoned by the mayor. That such methods were formerly used was virtually admitted by the men at the building-trades headquarters before the end of the first conversation. "All that we have to do now to get rid of scabs," said one of the officials, "is to call off all the trades at work on the building." All the building-trades unions now stood together as one man in favour of the exclusive employment of union labour, and the contractor who tried to fight one union found himself

at war with all. The official went on to tell me of one contractor who had seemed to win in one of these fights, but it cost him so much that he soon made terms with the union and has since been a "model employer." At first I was inclined to discount these boasts of power, but when I read the "Articles of Agreement" between the "Carpenters' Executive Council" and the contracting carpenters, and examined the list of over five hundred contractors who had signed them, I realized that the allied Chicago unions ruled the building trades with an iron hand.

The main provisions of this contract were as follows:

"ARTICLE I. Eight hours shall constitute a day's work between the hours of 8 A.M. and 5 P.M.,  
What the unions have secured except Saturday, when work shall cease at 12 o'clock noon from June 1st to September 1st.

"ARTICLE II. The minimum rate of wages for journeymen carpenters shall be 37½ cents an hour from April 1, 1898, to March 31, 1899.

ARTICLE III. Double time shall be allowed on all overtime, Sunday work, New Year's Day, Decoration Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and Christmas Days, or the days celebrated for the foregoing. No work shall be allowed under any pretence on Labour Day.

ARTICLES IX and X. The party of the first part agrees to hire none but union carpenters. . . . A sympathetic strike, when ordered to promote the prin-

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ciples here laid down, shall not be a violation of this agreement."

The great gain from unionism has been the shortening of hours. Only in Anglo-Saxon countries where trades-unions are strong have the hours of labour been materially shortened; and in <sup>The short hours</sup> Anglo-Saxon countries the trades-unions have not only led the way in establishing almost ideal hours for skilled workmen, but they have been the chief support of the legislation that has put an end to inhuman hours for the unskilled. To the trades-unions, therefore, Anglo-Saxon countries owe an inestimable debt, for the short-hour movement has been the greatest economic factor in securing the greater physical and intellectual vigour and the better home life that distinguish the working people in Anglo-Saxon countries. It must not be thought, however, that this shortening of hours has brought with it a proportionate lessening of work. When I was in Germany, Professor Roscher, of Leipsic, told me of German workmen who, after living in America, returned to Germany, preferring the long hours at low wages there rather than stand the strain at which they were required to work in America. When in Chicago, I found that some American workmen sympathized with this view. At the carpenters' union headquarters, when I spoke warmly of the union victory in securing the eight hours' day, I was surprised to have one of the carpenters remark, "Yes; but if we won seven hours, half of us would be dead." When



I asked what he meant, he replied that every time the hours were shortened the bosses made them work just that much harder. He was older than the rest of the group, and it was evident that he found it difficult to keep the pace now demanded. When the trades-unions increased their demands of the contractors, the contractors increased theirs of the men, and there was no power to make any contractor keep any man who did not turn out a remunerative quantity of work. Were it not that the shorter hours enabled most of the men to work with greater intensity and without greater exhaustion, the increase of leisure would have been offset by a cut of wages.

As it was, there had been no cut in wages except that which was inevitable during the hard times. Even here the loss was slight. Between 1892 and 1897 carpenters' wages in Chicago fell only from 40 cents an hour to 35 cents. In 1898 they were raised to 37½ cents, and in 1899 they are again 40 cents. Even in 1897 these union carpenters in Chicago were getting \$2.80 for eight hours, while many of the non-union Southern carpenters were getting but \$1.25 for ten hours. The cut in Chicago due to the hard times was only 12½ per cent., while in Atlanta it had been nearly 40 per cent. Only in one way did the building-trades unions in Chicago suffer keenly from the depression, and that was through the want of employment. This evil bore hardest, of course, on the less efficient workmen, many of whom could get so

little work at union rates as carpenters that they were forced to become machine-tenders in factories. In this way a good many of the old union carpenters had suffered a heavy cut in wages. At the bench they used to get nearly \$3 a day. In the factories where building materials were made by machinery they were now getting \$2 or \$2.25. Every year, in good times as well as bad, the proportion of carpenters' work done in the factories was increasing, and thus carpenters' wages are really suffering reductions that do not appear in the union scale.

The way in which machinery was affecting their own wages may have accounted for the intensity of the feeling against it which these carpenters displayed. Not long before my visit they had sustained the stone-cutters in the barbarous strike against the use of a machine for sawing stone. When I tried, in a bungling way, to show that such strikes lessened the use of stone as a building material, and weakened the unions by arraying the interests of the community against them, I made little impression. The stonecutters, they said, were skilled workmen who got high wages. The machine-tenders needed no skill at all and were paid wretched wages. "We believe," said one of them, "that public sentiment sustains us in trying to keep work for well-paid labour."

When I asked them whether they themselves were not glad to buy machine-made goods—like the chairs and desk in their office—they answered rather doggedly

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that they were not. The hand-made things, they said—after the fashion of aristocratic disciples of Ruskin and Morris—lasted so much longer that they were cheaper in the end. When I instanced machine-made cloth, they were not so ready with an answer, and even expressed the belief that some machinery was all right. Nevertheless, the belief seemed ineradicable that machinery threw workmen out of employment. These men, with possibly two exceptions, were all silver Democrats, yet not one of them seemed to know that the twenty-five years preceding 1873 witnessed at the same time the greatest extension in the use of machinery and the fullest employment of labour that the century has known. All of them, without exception, believed with the Socialists that the increase of the unemployed since 1893 had been due chiefly to machinery. As I listened to them, President Schwab's arraignment of English trades-unions for their hostility to machinery recurred to me, and I felt that the omnipotence of trades-unions would mean industrial stagnation, as surely as the omnipotence of trusts. It is only because competition forces the workmen and capitalists in different trades to accept improvements that industrial progress goes on.

Of minor importance now, but not less threatening for the future, was the willingness of the Chicago trades-unions to combine against the use of out-of-town materials. In so far as the Chicago materials were made by union work-

' A new combination in restraint of trade '

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men with wholesome hours and wages, and the out-of-town materials were made by overworked and underpaid hands, there was moral justification for the discrimination. But the Chicago unionists were ready to use the boycott in favour of Chicago union labour to the detriment of out-of-town union labour. It was protectionism pure and simple, involving not only the restriction of trade but the forcing of industries out of favourable into unfavourable localities. Every interest except that of a few Chicago producers was adversely affected, yet in this peculiarly anti-social struggle the Chicago unions had the support instead of the hostility of their employers. This is a feature of trades-unionism that in the future must be reckoned with.

The discussions of the union rules about overtime and Sunday work went much more agreeably. Here again the position of the unions seemed to me that which the public welfare demanded. <sup>Overtime and Sunday work</sup> The sentiment against overtime and Sunday work was in part philanthropic, the men believing that the union requirement divided the work to be done among more men. In part also it was shrewdly practical. When the employers had to run nights and Sundays, their own earnings were high. Their capital, as one printer pointed out to me, was employed more hours. Their rents and interest were not increased, and there was but little more superintendence needed when work was heavy than when it was light. Therefore they could afford to pay more at such times.

The main consideration, however, was the exhaustion caused by overwork. "After night work and Sunday work," said this workman, "we get to feeling like wooden men." His union charged time and a half after six o'clock, and double time after twelve o'clock and on Sundays. One result of such regulations was that they forced employers to reduce overtime and Sunday work to the minimum, and to give the men consecutive work at union hours, instead of alternating overwork and no work. The religious motive for the prohibition of Sunday work was disappointingly absent, so far as my limited conversations on the subject went, but—as I had previously observed in New York—the least religious of trades-unionists were insistent upon a free Sunday, and not merely upon one free day in seven. It seems somewhat singular, but at the very time that opposition to Sunday labour is relaxing among well-to-do Christians it is gaining strength among organized workingmen.

It is in the building trades that the union movement centres, but it was not here that I found the best exponent of trades-unionism. Early in my work, with a card from one of the residents at Hull House, I called on President George W. Perkins, of the Cigar-makers' International Union, and the two hours' talk with him was so profitable that I took the liberty of returning to him again before I left the city. Here was a man whom any professor of political economy in the country might with advantage

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Union and  
President

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call to his chair to give his students a week's course upon trades-unionism. There was no rhetoric, no exaggeration, no claim that trades-unionists represented all that was reasonable, or employers all that was the reverse. His talk was a calm, clear statement of the organization, methods, aims, defeats, and successes of the Cigar-makers' Union. From my observation in New York I had supposed that this trade was largely in the hands of immigrants, but I found that President Perkins was not only of American birth, but of American ancestry since 1640. Four-fifths of the organized cigar-makers in the country, he said, were of American birth. When I asked how the proportion stood among the non-union cigar-makers, he said that the difference would be slight, taking the country as a whole, because the 20,000 cigar-makers in Pennsylvania were almost all American-born and unorganized. Outside of Pennsylvania, however, unionism was stronger among native-born than among immigrant workmen. The sharp line of cleavage, however, was the sectional one. As I had previously learned about the iron trades, so here in the cigar trade the West was well organized, the East badly. Of the 20,000 cigar-makers in New York City only 7000 were members of the union; of the 20,000 in Pennsylvania practically none were members; but of the 30,000 cigar-makers further west over 20,000 were in the unions. The small towns—and this, too, is fairly typical—were better organized than the large, and “more attentive

to the union label." This President Perkins accounted for on the ground that "neighbourly feeling" is stronger in the smaller towns, and therefore organization is easier.

The question of the union label focussed the whole philosophy of trades-unionism. What the The "union label" union label stands for is precisely what the building-trades alliance stands for when it orders sympathetic strikes to secure the exclusive employment of union men. The sympathetic strike is the effective weapon of the building-trades unions to secure their demands, and the union label may in the near future give a similar weapon to all trades-unions. In the labour world the "union label" expresses the same sentiment that "consumers' leagues" express among the well-to-do. It expresses the moral sense that the old duty to treat our own employees well involves the new duty to patronize others who treat their employees well. This feeling is strong among organized workmen; and their test as to whether firms treat their hands well is whether they grant the conditions demanded by the unions. They believe in the exclusive employment of union labour, said President Perkins, not merely because the non-unionists pay no dues and therefore are not entitled to the benefits of union action, but also because non-unionists seem to them the tools of the enemies of the labour movement. They believe that the unions are fighting the battle for the entire working class, and their consciences as well as their in-

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terests support their discriminations against non-union men. Through the union label all unionists were able to help each other. The "blue label" of the Cigar-makers' Union, said President Perkins, was now so much in demand in the West that manufacturers could hardly afford to be without it. When I referred to the current gibes of New York unionists as to the quality of "blue-label" cigars, he said that the time was long since past in Chicago when a "blue-label smoke" was a poor smoke. Union labour, he said, was employed in making the best cigars, and "blue-label" cigars were now to be had at the swellest cigar-shops in Chicago. He was ready to admit that where the union label was new and only a few firms had it, these firms might sometimes take advantage of those determined to have the label; but where the use of the label was well established he thought that patrons obtained the best quality of work at reasonable prices. President Perkins was in no sense a visionary man, and what he said about the growth of popular sentiment in favour of union-label goods convinced me that this, too, was one of the economic forces soon to be reckoned with. To be sure, it is purely moral in its character, since self-interest and indifference will always prompt the unionist to buy the cheapest and most convenient things, regardless of how they have been made. But if the conscience of all unionists, as well as that of philanthropists, once accepts the commandment, "Thou shalt not buy goods which any one has been



wronged in making," it will prove a powerful factor in diverting trade toward firms whose employees believe themselves to be well treated.

That which possessed the greatest immediate interest, however, in President Perkins's talk with me was the report upon the insurance work of his organization.

The dues of the Cigar-makers' Union are thirty cents a week, and the dues and assessments together are about seventeen dollars a year. The yearly expenditures for strikes during the past decade have averaged barely one dollar a member. The yearly expenditures for officers' salaries, hall rents, postage, etc., amount to barely four dollars a member. Thirty dollars a week is the maximum salary, and this is paid only to the President, who is at the head of a business aggregating half a million dollars a year. One dollar a member is paid yearly for the union-label agitation. The remaining eleven dollars are returned to the members in various insurance benefits. No insurance company, not co-operative, returns to the insured so large a percentage of their payments.

The "death benefits" paid by the Cigar-makers' Union amount to \$200 for those who have been members for five consecutive years, and to \$550 for those who have been members for fifteen consecutive years. These "death benefits" aggregate about \$70,000 a year, or about \$2.50 a member. The "sick benefits" paid by the union furnish a form of insurance that no capitalistic organization could offer without ensuring a

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vast amount of unnecessary sickness. Union cigar-makers, after one week of sickness not due to "intemperance or immoral conduct," are entitled to five dollars a week for a maximum of thirteen weeks in one year. The *esprit de corps* of the union, and the unwillingness of any but the meanest workmen to be suspected of sponging on their fellows, is the chief protection of the order against imposition, but the regulations regarding the visiting of the sick are a rare combination of philanthropy and business caution. The "sick benefits" are more important than those paid in cases of death, and aggregate about \$110,000 a year, or nearly four dollars a member. Most important of all, however, during the hard times, have been the "out-of-work benefits." To begin with, the Cigar-makers' Union lends about \$30,000 a year to members out of work who wish to travel in search of it. These loans are nearly all repaid by the members in ten per cent. weekly assessments after work is found, so that this tramping in good faith for work is hardly more burdensome to the union than to society. Besides these loans, however, the union pays to all members in good standing when out of work three dollars a week for as high as eighteen weeks a year. The only restrictions are that no benefits shall be paid during the first week after the member is laid off, that none shall be paid during the midsummer months, when living expenses are light and other work easily obtained, and that members who have received the benefit for six weeks must then go

without it for seven weeks. In this way the union ensures that its members shall not lightly leave old jobs or be careless about finding new ones. This form of insurance was begun by the Cigar-makers' Union in 1890, and, until the hard times set in, cost less than one dollar a year per member. With the depression of 1893, however, the out-of-work payments suddenly became the heaviest of all. From \$17,000 in 1892 they rose to \$174,000 in 1894, fell slightly with the slight business revival in 1895, rose again to \$175,000 with the deepened depression of 1896, and fell to \$117,000 in 1897, when the present revival began. During all these trying years the Cigar-makers' Union was not compelled to lower the scale of wages to correspond to the fall in prices; like the less organized trades, nor to lose members from its organization because of want of employment, like many of the best organized trades. The out-of-work insurance held all the members together, and while they suffered severely from lack of work, none were pauperized, and their organization came out of the depression stronger than at the beginning. Its reserve fund, indeed, was slightly lowered, but at the close there were \$177,000 in the union treasury.

Only one thing seemed to President Perkins to threaten the increased prosperity of his union, and that was the possible entrance of the trust into the cigar-making business. Among the Socialists, as I have said, the trusts are

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labour vs.  
organized  
capital

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rather welcomed than otherwise; but among the trades-unionists the trusts are as cordially hated as among farmers. The trusts can crush unions. Competing firms, on the contrary, can be compelled to make terms with their workmen or risk the loss of men and business to their rivals. President Perkins told me of cigar firms that had won in the strikes against them, but had found their business gone when they attempted to resume it. At present the cigar-making business is chiefly in the hands of small firms—some of them employing but one or two men. It is, therefore, almost as easy sometimes for the men to find other employers as for employers to find other men. But if the trust, which already controls the cigarette business to the utter suppression of unions, should enter the cigar-making field, there would be trouble ahead. The sentiment regarding trusts among the cigar-makers had its counterpart in that which prevailed among the carpenters regarding the contractors' association—though the outlook there was more hopeful. "At first," said one of the carpenters' officials, "we wanted the employers to organize, as we preferred to have one agreement to a lot of little strikes with single employers. Afterwards they tried to take advantage of their organization to force us down, and we broke their organization up." "But," I asked, "couldn't they go longer without their profits than you without your wages?" "No," was the reply, "because they knew that if they all stopped, the union itself would take contracts."

Here, then, is a possible outcome for the future. The unions are accumulating reserve funds, and, in spite of immigration, are increasing rapidly in discipline and intelligence. The time is coming when the unions may be able to manage business co-operatively. They are, it is true, in need of moral restraints from within, and the restraints of public opinion and even public law from without; but the road to industrial democracy surely lies in the strengthening of the one democratic factor in the control of industry, and not in its threatened overthrow by industrial absolutism. The time is yet coming when historians will look back upon the present-day struggles of trades-unionists as historians to-day look back upon the parish and town meetings of the despised Puritan "levellers" of the seventeenth century. The men may seem commonplace and the measures petty, but it is through just such instrumentalities that the great designs for human advancement are always worked out.

## IX

### THE MORMONS

As I was entering Utah one of my car companions proved to be an apostate Mormon. He had left the Church, he said, because it interfered with his "liberty," but, "unlike most Mormon apos-<sup>Industrial  
independ-  
ence</sup>tates," he had not become an absolute infidel. He still believed in God and immortality, and thought that the Mormon conception of the future life, where men advanced from glory to glory until they became gods, was more full of hope than anything promised in any of the other Churches. He was an uneducated workman, and not naturally religious, but the way in which he spoke of the Mormon faith would have convinced me—had I needed such convincing—that his former Church did not owe its marvellous hold upon its poorer members to the provisions it made for their material advancement. Nevertheless, the most instructive things he told me related to these provisions. Brigham Young, he said, tried to provide that each family in the towns should own an acre, and each family in the farming districts fifteen or twenty acres—every family all the land it could use. The result is that

nearly every Mormon family owns its farm or home. This statement was afterwards repeated by other Mormon sympathizers, and I now find that it is abundantly confirmed by the national census of mortgages. In the cities and towns of Utah, despite the recent Gentile immigration to Salt Lake City, sixty per cent. of the families own their homes, and in the rural districts, where the population is almost entirely Mormon, ninety-one per cent. own their farms. The only State in the Union which equals Utah in its freedom from landlords in town or country is Maine, and even there the greater number of mortgages makes the record less satisfactory than in the Mormon commonwealth. The people of Utah, whatever their ecclesiastical servitude, are industrially free.

My car acquaintance was not inclined to speak of his grievances against his old Church—and I liked him the better for it—but the impression he left upon my mind was a cheerless one, except as regards industrial conditions. My next Utah acquaintance—my first orthodox Mormon acquaintance—was of an entirely different type. In the depot at Ogden, where I was detained for nearly an hour, I fell into conversation with a young man whose refined face and clear eyes recalled to me the best type of a New England college boy. I was not surprised when he told me that we was a school-teacher; but when he said that he was a Mormon, I felt that the Mormon religion must be something better than I had ever imagined.

My first  
Mormon  
acquaint-  
ance


His name, I soon learned, was that of one of my best friends at Amherst, his father's brother was a Congregational minister in New England, and his father had been converted to Mormonism after he reached manhood. The only anti-Mormon prejudice which this young man's face and conversation did not belie was that against polygamy. I was relieved to find that his father was not a polygamist and had never believed polygamy an essential part of the Mormon faith. I did not learn from him what the Mormon faith was, but I entered Salt Lake City that Sunday morning determined to find out what there was in Mormonism that made it a power in the lives of good and educated men.

By noontime I had found my way to a Mormon Sunday-school. It was in the assembly house in one of the well-to-do "wards," and two or three of the teachers were distinctively of the aristocratic A Mormon missionary type. One of these—the son of a prominent Salt Lake banker—had a face that was intellectually fine, though spiritually it was lacking. The Superintendent was not a man of culture, but his remarks, and still more his prayer, were fully up to the common level in well-to-do Sunday-schools in the East. The lesson, unfortunately, was about Moses, and there was nothing to indicate that I was in a Mormon rather than an orthodox Sunday-school. The hymns, indeed, were unfamiliar, but they embodied no novel doctrine and were remarkably well sung. Altogether I learned nothing of the distinctive tenets of Mormonism, until a



man of forty, with a strong but unprepossessing face, seated himself beside me and we began to converse. This man proved to be a returned missionary, and as he was even fonder of a discussion than myself, it was nearly time for afternoon church when he had finished with me. I learned from him what there was in the Mormon faith that had made men willing to endure scorn and persecution in its behalf.

This missionary was an Englishman by birth, and his parents were Baptists. When, as a young man, he was religiously awakened, he saw that the churches about him did not attempt to follow the Word of God. At this time he heard the preaching of some Mormon missionaries, and found that the Mormon Church accepted in their simplicity the commands that had rested upon his own conscience. When I asked what some of these were, he replied somewhat as follows: "Well, there is the command to fast. Nothing in the Bible is clearer, yet none of the Christians about me ever thought of fasting. The Mormons, on the contrary, have frequent days of fasting and prayer, and in order to fast for the good of others, the portion they would naturally consume on these days is devoted scrupulously to the poor. Then there is the command to pay tithes. The other churches treat it as a dead letter. The Mormons, on the contrary, pay their tithes with religious exactness. From the poorest to the richest, all pay to the Church and through the Church one-tenth of all their increase. Then there is the command to



ministers not to take scrip or purse when they go forth to preach the Gospel. The Mormon missionaries who came to England came in this way, and all who go forth now either go as did the apostles, or have themselves saved the money to meet their own expenses. It was in this way that I went, and in this way that about two thousand Mormon missionaries are now carrying forward our work in other States and in foreign lands. No Mormon ever preaches for pay, neither does any Mormon disobey the Scriptures by preparing beforehand what he shall say. We trust that it will be revealed to us what we shall speak, and so follow Christ's command. We also obey the command that brother shall not go to law with brother. If two of us cannot settle our disputes, we accept the judgment of the appointed Church officers. Finally, we accept the teaching of Scripture that God will continue to reveal himself to his people, and that he commands us to be perfect as he is perfect. We do not believe that revelation ended eighteen hundred years ago, but think that the Holy Spirit will lead into all truth those whose hearts are pure; and we try, by fasting and prayer, by abstinence from liquors and tobacco and everything that deadens the higher nature, to keep our hearts sensitive to the divine guidance. We believe that God intends that we shall become like himself." The various points were not made in such rapid succession. But as point after point of the New Testament faith cherished by the Mormons was set forth, I saw more

clearly than before that it was not what was sensual and false in the Mormon creed that had made its adherents face death in the desert, but the truths which in all ages have made saints and martyrs.

When, however, I forced the conversation to the question of polygamy, the almost eloquent expressions of an exalted mysticism gave place to pettifogging literalism and disgusting materialism.

The defence of polygamy


No ecclesiastic ever used the letter of Scripture to silence conscience much better than this Mormon missionary. "Was not Abraham the 'father of the faithful'?" "Was not David 'a man after God's own heart'?" "Has God changed?" If I had believed in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, or if I had disbelieved in the Mormon doctrine of continuous revelation, it would have been impossible for me to answer him. When, however, recalling his own faith that higher laws become binding upon the consciences of later generations, I cited the words of Christ against the Mosaic law of divorce, he resorted to casuistry as strained as ever disgraced pulpit justifications of crime. "The Mormons," he said, "do not allow a man to put away his wife. . . . We regard adultery as a crime second only to murder." But he made a wide distinction between the adultery of putting away one wife to marry another and the sanctity of bringing the second woman into the family of the first! In the course of his argument he went at length into the physiology of men and women to show that polygamy

was the divine order ; and finally, in order to find a Christian precedent for the practice, made the monstrous claim that Christ himself was probably a polygamist. His whole argument was revolting.

I afterwards talked with other Mormons about polygamy, but those who defended it at all did so with much better sense and better feeling than this extremely able missionary. I was finally at a loss to account for the singular offensiveness of his argument, except on the supposition that he himself had entered into polygamous relations in violation of his conscience, and had afterwards wrenched his moral nature, as ecclesiastics are apt to do when determined to find a religious justification for wrong. The other Mormons with whom I spoke uniformly referred to polygamy as a dead issue, and one or two of them referred to Brigham Young's declaration that Mormons would abandon polygamy when Gentiles fulfilled the duty of matrimony. All of these Mormons—and fair-minded non-Mormons supported them—agreed in declaring that not more than ten per cent. of Mormon families had ever been polygamous. The truth of this statement ought to be apparent to any one who has ever visited Utah, even if he has carried his investigations no further than a single visit to the Mormon Tabernacle. When, after a ten-minute dinner, I reached that great assembly-place just as the service began, it seemed to me that I had rarely seen a congregation that was further from suggesting polygamy.

A monogamous congregation

If the overworked traveller from another planet should make us another visit and get his impressions of Mormonism and orthodoxy from the Tabernacle at Salt Lake City and a fashionable congregation in New York, he would surely report to his fellow beings that the orthodox Christians are polygamists and the Mormons monogamists. What seemed to be true regarding the proportion of men and women in the Tabernacle is demonstrably true in the whole State of Utah. The last census showed 110,000 males and only 97,000 females. Among the adults the disproportion of men is even greater, for among the children the number of males and females is the same. Curiously enough, my Mormon missionary, in arguing that polygamy was the divine order, had claimed that the number of girls vastly exceeded the number of boys. I mention the mistake because an intelligent friend of mine in the East had the same impression, and even thought that the disproportion of girls might be two or three to one. My friend, I hardly need say, was from Massachusetts; but even in his State the number of single males slightly exceeds the number of single females. A similar disproportion of males exists wherever immigration has exceeded emigration, for it is pre-eminently the young men who leave home to seek their fortunes. Nowhere does polygamy do such violence to the natural order as in the western part of the United States, where Mormonism attempted to establish it. Among the Mormons themselves the record of children shows that the orig-



inal order of creation still rules, and that, as in the beginning, male and female creates He them.

The service in the Tabernacle opened with superb singing by the great choir. In every district, I was afterwards told, there is a similarly drilled choir, and yearly these choirs gather at great musical festivals. The universal cultivation of music is practically a part of the Mormon religion. After the singing and prayer, President Paul, of the Agricultural College, who had recently returned from a two years' missionary residence in England, was asked to address the congregation regarding his experiences. In him I found a missionary of a much finer type than my companion of the morning. There was the utmost sincerity and directness in everything he said, and the man's personality was healthful and attractive. He told the congregation of his labours as one of the twenty-five missionaries of the Birmingham Conference. With the old Christian spirit he spoke of the revilings and persecutions endured and the false reports circulated about them. He had pleaded with those who would hear him to judge Mormonism by its fruits. Among the Mormons, he had told the English, there was no profanity and no drinking, and the poor were cared for as nowhere else in the world. He had been helped and strengthened by his labours, but his words and those of his companions had seemed to fall on deaf ears. There had been no converts. The effect of the address, while uplifting because of the spiritual character of the


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returned  
missionary

man, was depressing to the congregation because of the report as to results, and Counsellor George Q. Cannon followed the missionary with an address of encouragement. The work done by the missionaries in this life, he said, was merely the beginning of that which they were to do in the life to come. He himself, as a young man, had spent years in preaching to the Hawaiians. This labour was in no sense lost, though the converts made were among a dying race. "In the next world these converts shall preach." Still another speaker followed, but his address could not have been distinguished from a sermon in an orthodox pulpit. Indeed, his central thought was the well-known definition of religion as "the life of God in the soul of man."

After the service I took a long walk through one of the residence districts of the city, and had occasion to admire not only the way in which it was laid out, but also the architecture of many of the dwellings. Particularly was this true on the hill where the leading members of the old hierarchy had their homes. Brigham Young himself seems to have been nearly as great a genius as an architect as he was as a statesman, financier, and leader of men—and women. From an acquaintance whom I chanced to meet during my walk—an Episcopalian whose wife had been brought up a Mormon—I inquired how Brigham Young had acquired his great private fortune, and the answer was, Entirely through business sagacity. Though

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he devoted a large part of his energy to building up the wealth of the Church and the co-operative industries which he planned, his private investments of every sort proved so remunerative that at his death he left about \$20,000 to each of his wives and children, and about \$1,200,000 to the Brigham Young Academies that are scattered all over the State. Other members of the hierarchy had also been exceptionally successful in business, and although one or two of them owed their fortunes to Union Pacific contracts, their wealth, as a rule, was as honourably acquired as any in the country. They did not owe their wealth to their position in the Church, but rather their position in the Church to their wealth. Nearly all these magnates were polygamists. In fact, I had not been long in Utah before I was compelled to observe that polygamy was generally confined to what are everywhere called "the better classes." Herbert Spencer remarks that the nobility in Europe was the last class to give up polygamy; and certainly in Utah the aristocracy was the first to re-establish it—the "royal family" leading the way. The reason, of course, was largely financial—as only the better-to-do men were able to support several families. But supplementing this financial reason there soon came to be an ecclesiastical one. Just as the Catholic Church was led by its glorification of celibacy to demand the celibacy of its clergy, so the Mormon Church was led by its glorification of polygamy to demand the polygamy of its higher ministers. Thus polygamy came to be the





mark of leadership in the Church as well as leadership in the business world ; and when we recall how men in other Churches accept the leadership of the aristocracy—despite all that Christ said about such leadership—we cannot wonder that the Mormons came to attach peculiar dignity and even sanctity to an institution represented by the men of wealth, the men of intelligence, and the men of standing in their Church.

On Monday morning I called at the Church headquarters, and was courteously received by Counsellor George Q. Cannon (whose son, the Senator, I had previously met in the East), and was introduced by him to Mr. Milton Musser, one of the Church historians, who in turn introduced me to other Church leaders, and explained to me the ecclesiastical system. One of the leaders to whom I was presented was Lorenzo Snow, whose official title is "Prophet, Priest, and Revelator, and President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in all the world." Mr. Snow proved to be a man with an exceptionally refined face and gentlemanly bearing, over whom eighty-odd winters had passed leaving hardly a mark upon his vigour of body or cheerfulness of spirit. He had gone to school at Oberlin, back in the days when Oberlin alone among the colleges stood for the principles of humanity which all now profess. It was easy to see that it was the vision of a new brotherhood and not sensual passion that had impelled him toward the Mormon faith. Other of the leading men were hardly less remarkable



in appearance, particularly some of the heads of the large business houses. With these men most of my conversation did not relate to Mormonism, and it was at first hard for me to realize that they were Mormons. When, however, I had met a succession of them, and found that they were usually as prominent in their Church as they were in the business world, I began to suspect that the Book of Mormon must be a finer book than I had imagined. This suspicion, however, proved to be utterly unfounded, for when, at the end of the second or third day, I bought a copy of the book, it seemed to me as empty as I had previously supposed. But the intellectual weakness of the book does not seriously affect the intellectual strength of the men who believe in it, and there is no doubt that they administer with ability the marvellous Church system under which the Mormon people have attained their prosperity.

The Mormon Church is a democratic theocracy, whose activities cover almost as wide a field as the advanced Socialist would ask for the State. It not only cares for the religious, moral, and intellectual education of its members, but protects them against mutual wrongs, and looks after their material and even their social well-being. Every ward seemed to have its pleasure-house, which was often in the same building with the meeting-house, and was recognised as hardly less essential to the collective life of the community. In caring for its poorer members the whole Church virtually made itself a vast labour ex-

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change. At the central headquarters in Salt Lake City, Mr. Musser told me, the officials are in touch with the industrial needs of every Mormon family in Utah, Idaho, and Colorado, and wherever men need work, or work needs men, the needs are at once supplied. In this way the recruits gained by the missionaries are cared for and made to feel that the Mormon system is applied Christianity. The judicial system of the Church is the necessary outcome of the belief that brother should not go to law with brother. If there is a disagreement between Mormons in any ward, the ward "bishop" and two counsellors act as arbitrators, without occasioning any expense. If either of the parties refuses to accept the decision, an appeal can be taken to a "stake" or county court made up of "high-priests," if I remember correctly. From this body, in important cases, another appeal can be had to the "presidency," composed of the highest Church officials; and, finally, the matter may be referred to the whole body of the Church. The penalty of not accepting the decision of this final court of appeals is, of course, excommunication, and few Mormons have ever invoked this penalty. This judicial system is effective in nearly every case without resort to physical compulsion.

The funds with which the Church carries on its work of Church extension, education, poor relief, etc., are raised by the tithing system. Everybody is expected to bring to the "stake" or county tithing-house an exact tenth of all his income. The expectation seems

to be generally fulfilled, for the Mormon Church has developed among its members more sensitive consciences regarding the payment of their income-taxes than any other Church has developed among its members in any part of the world. When I spoke of the obvious injustice of exacting the same percentage from the poorest wage-earner as from the richest capitalist — because the small incomes leave no margin from which taxes can be taken without inhumanity—Mr. Musser replied that the Church asked all to give the tithe for Church work, but itself gave directly to the poor much more than they gave to it, and helped them still further by loans without interest, until they owned their homes and could help others.

The tithing-houses at which the taxes are paid are in some respects great co-operative markets, at which Church-members exchange their products without paying profits to middlemen. The tithes are paid in produce and not in money—thus lightening the burdens of the members, particularly in bad years when prices are low and sales difficult. To facilitate exchanges, the tithing-house issues scrip, on which is printed: “Good at the General Storehouse for ——— dollars’ (or cents’) worth of Produce or Merchandise at Retail Prices.” In this scrip the business officers of the Church receive their salaries, and there are few things they cannot buy with it. It furnishes a costless currency such as the builders of co-operative commonwealths always make a part of their system.

The Mormons must be recognised as pre-eminently pioneers of a co-operative commonwealth. As Leonard's "Story of Oberlin" clearly shows, the Mormon religion came into being at the time of the great spiritual ferment in which the agitations for abolition, prohibition, woman's suffrage, and co-operation had their rise, and the Mormon leaders were men in common life filled with the enthusiasm for a new social order. In England, it will be recalled, the zeal for co-operation first expressed itself in the fruitful experiments of Robert Owen at his own factories, and the fruitless colonies sent out under his inspiration. In France it found expression in the Paris Commune established by the democratic revolutionists. In this country the Brook Farm experiment was one of its manifestations, and its impress on New England literature was of the first importance. Nowhere, however, did it yield concrete results of such varied and enduring character as among the Mormons of Utah.

In Salt Lake City, for example, the apparent centre of Mormon business life is the Zion's Co-operative Mercantile Institution. This enterprise has to some extent lost its co-operative character, for the number of its stockholders—about eight hundred—is now small compared with the Mormon population which might be expected to trade with it. When, however, I visited the thriving town of Lehi, containing about three thousand people, I found that the number of shareholders in the co-operative store was still about half as

great as the number of families. In the beginning it was everywhere Brigham Young's plan that practically every Mormon family should be a stockholder in the co-operative store, and to this end the shares were issued at five dollars each. The subsequent concentration of ownership has been due to natural causes—the richer Mormons continually buying the shares which the poorer have sold, either in times of need, or else to buy or improve their farms and homes. The Salt Lake co-operative establishment practically corresponds to the wholesale houses in the English co-operative system. Since it was started in 1869 its capital stock has been increased to fivefold, and is now over a million dollars, while its annual sales exceed four million dollars. The yearly dividends have averaged more than nine per cent. Of the local co-operative stores there are two hundred in various parts of Utah, and nearly all have done well. In the beginning they were of even greater service to the people than now, for without the co-operative stores the little settlements would either have been subjected to the arbitrary charges of a single store or the wastefulness of maintaining two competitors. Through these co-operative stores, also, the early Mormon settlers seem to have got along with even less money than other primitive communities. There was absolute mutual confidence between the stores and their customers, and cash settlements were few and far between. At Lehi a Mormon layman—if any Mormon is ever a layman—said to me, "For the

first five years here I didn't see fifty cents a year"; while the bishop at the head of the co-operative store said, "In former days we would do two hundred to three hundred dollars' worth of business a day, and not take in more than ten dollars in money." These conditions have, of course, passed away wherever the more complex industrial relationships of town and city have grown up. In Salt Lake City business is done for cash, just as in other cities, and the Mormons to a surprising extent give their trade to the stores established by Gentiles. The Jews—who, by common consent, are "Gentiles" in Salt Lake City—are as prosperous there as elsewhere. This was the more noteworthy because the Church owns some shares in the "Zion's Co-operative," and I expected to see Mormon trade more largely concentrated there.

These co-operative stores, though the most conspicuous of the co-operative enterprises, by no means stand alone. At Salt Lake City the Co-operative Institution made some of the goods it sold.

Other co-operative enterprises

I went through the shoemaking department, and found that the conditions of labour as regards hours and wages were in no sense exceptionally good, but that the spirit of the workmen was. I was told that there had never been any labour trouble in the factory, and the general appearance of things certainly supported the statement. When, a day or two later, I went into the rural districts to spend a night on a Mormon farm a few miles from the city, I was struck with

the number of co-operative undertakings in the neighbourhood. It is true that they were co-operative in name more often than they were co-operative in reality ; but the situation fully supported the boast that whenever Brigham Young went into a community and found that it needed a sawmill or flour-mill or cannery or what-not, he at once planned some organization through which the people could provide it for themselves. Often, I was told, he would at the outset advance part of the money needed. It is impossible that he should have been the direct initiator of half the co-operative enterprises on foot, but the veneration in which he is held for his work in this direction may some time create a tradition of this sort. In this particular farming locality the irrigation was not conducted upon co-operative principles, but the town government at the time of my visit was trying to secure town ownership of the water-supply. Some of the wealthier citizens, whose land was already well watered, were putting legal difficulties in the way of this public enterprise, but there was no doubt in the minds of the people that public works would secure a supply of water much more abundant and much less costly than could be secured by means of private ditches. One sweet-faced old Mormon lady said that she could not understand how my host, a religious man, could stand in the way of the public good. When I went to Lehi, I found that co-operative irrigation, through public action, was already established, and that three neighbouring municipalities were co-operating to con-




serve a common reservoir. All of these Mormon garden-spots are near the mountains, from which the streams are positive freshets at the first melting of the snow in the spring. With sufficient reservoirs the water that then goes to waste can be stored so as to keep an immense tract of territory well irrigated till after harvest. When I asked if there was not friction among the three localities owing to the unwillingness of each to contribute more than its share, I was told that the only difficulties experienced came from precisely the opposite occasion of jealousy. Each town was to receive water in proportion to its contribution, and each was therefore anxious to contribute as much as possible. There was not the slightest question as to the profitableness of the joint undertaking. Water in Utah is sold by the "inch"—an "inch" being roughly the amount needed to irrigate an acre. The price varies greatly, but land is well situated that can get its water at a dollar a year for each acre. If, therefore, the expenditure of a hundred thousand dollars would secure a plentiful supply of water for a township—six miles square—it would prove a wonderful investment.

My night on a Mormon farm I owed to the courtesy of Mr. Musser. I had gone to Utah intending to prepare an article on irrigation among the Mormons, and changed my plan only when I found the Mormons so much more interesting than their irrigation. When I asked Mr. Musser where in the neighbourhood of Salt Lake City I could

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get an insight into the methods by which his people had secured water for their desert, he suggested that the town of Bountiful would be as good a locality as any near by, and gave me a letter to an intelligent farmer there. This farmer turned out to be the head of the co-operative store at Bountiful, and when I presented my letter to him at his store, I had some question as to whether he would invite me to visit him at his farm. This fear, however, was removed when he saw from whom my letter came. I was received with apparently as much cordiality and confidence as if I had been described as a missionary of his own faith. It was evident that in Bountiful the newspaper correspondent had not added to the terrors of living. At the store I was introduced to everybody who came in, including the most outspoken opponent of Mormonism in all that district—the man whom one of my anti-Mormon friends in Salt Lake City wanted me to meet in order that I might learn the seamy side of Mormonism in the rural districts. Fortunately, this critic of Mormonism was as truthful as he was bold, and the things he told me and those told me by my host did not widely differ. When the time came for supper, I was driven to my host's farmhouse, a mile or two away, and presented to his wife and younger boys. One of his older boys was away as a missionary, and two of them, if I remember rightly, were away on a hunting trip. The house was a roomy one, and there was a good parlour, but the cooking was done in the dining-room, which was living-room




as well. This arrangement was immensely economical of labour, and the next day, when I learned the wife's part on a Mormon farm, I heartily approved of it. After supper my host and I had a long talk, and we agreed so well in our views of politics and our interest in economic matters that we soon discussed even Mormonism with the utmost unconstraint. Then came a colossal blunder on my part. I had met during the three preceding days a good many Mormons whom I knew to be polygamists, and a good many whom I knew to have but one wife, and the latter alone had looked me frankly in the face as they talked. I had almost reached the conclusion that I could tell a polygamist when I saw him, by a certain expressionlessness of the eyes, perhaps essential to his double or multiple life. My host at Bountiful was as fearlessly and light-heartedly frank as I could ask any one to be, and, in the most absolute confidence that he was a monogamist, I asked whether he thought polygamous marriages could be happy. "How is that, Hattie?" he asked, and then, to my confusion but his apparent enjoyment, he told me that I was in a polygamous household. I have not since been so confident of my ability to read faces. The incident, however, rather helped relations than hurt them, and before the evening was over we knew each other's opinions as we could not have done except for my appalling misstep.

The next morning he had to go early to the store, but arranged that one of his sons by his first marriage should

call and drive me about to see the irrigation plants in the district. Meanwhile my host's wife showed me how their own farm was watered. The mountain stream was not far away, and the ditches connecting it with the farm were of the simplest possible description. The only engineering skill shown was in the selection of routes by which the water was brought. These were often circuitous, but by means of them practically every part of the farm was reached without any pumping or any building of raised aqueducts across depressions. Every little ditch had a gate by which the water could be let in or shut out. During the first of the season, my hostess told me, they had water for the whole farm; later, only for the garden and orchard; and, finally, only for the orchard. The productiveness of the little farm was simply astonishing. What my hostess told me about the alfalfa crops impressed me even less than what she said about the garden. This she and the children took care of, and the number of crates of berries she was able to raise every season in a small patch, watered just when she wished and to the precise amount, was nothing short of marvellous. I did not know local prices well enough to figure closely as to the receipts, but it was perfectly evident that the income from the garden, added to that from the dairy and the poultry-yard—which also the wife cared for—nearly supported the family. The economic secret of polygamy in Utah was explained.

When the son arrived with his horse and buggy, I


was driven all over the country, by a pure-minded, frank, likable young fellow, who thoroughly enjoyed helping me with my work. The further we went, the more the methods of irrigation became the incidental rather than the essential part of my observations. On one farm, however, I was greatly interested in an artesian or "flowing" well, and on another in a new reservoir, built for a hundred dollars and storing nearly twenty thousand gallons of water. At a third place there was a novel pumping device, but just what it was made much less of an impression upon me than the fact that the nominal head of the household was a Republican, while his wife—an old school-teacher from Maine—was a strong Democrat. Both voted, but, in Utah, as in Wyoming, the occasional political differences between man and wife seem in no way to disturb domestic harmony. At noon my companion took me to dine at his own home, which was perhaps half a mile from his father's other home, where I had spent the night. His mother was a bright old lady, who told me, without the remotest suggestion of an inquiry on my part, that when the Church agreed to sustain the law against polygamy, she had told her husband that it was his place to remain with his younger wife and little children. During the afternoon my inquiries rarely returned to the subject of irrigation. The schools of the district and various phases of the social life almost monopolized the time. Before I returned to the city, however, I made inquiry as to the value of farms, and found that one hundred



dollars an acre had come to be an ordinary price for irrigated land. It was natural for me to contrast this price with that of twenty dollars an acre for which I had recently been offered a farm in New York, only fifty miles from the metropolis. When I recall the landscape of Bountiful, the comfortable homes, the orchards weighed down with fruit, and the vineyards with grapes, I cannot wonder that the Mormons feel that Mormonism has fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah and made "the wilderness and the solitary place" to be glad thereof, and the desert to "rejoice and blossom as the rose."

The next morning I took the train to Lehi, the centre of one of the beet-sugar districts. The President of the woollen-mills at Salt Lake City <sup>Beet-sugar</sup> had given me a cordial letter to his brother, the Bishop of Lehi, who was the head of the sugar-factory there. My reception was as cordial as the letter, and the Bishop gave up to me the greater part of the morning. The factory in many respects resembled the cane-sugar factory I had seen on a great plantation in Louisiana. In each case the cost of the manufacturing plant must have exceeded half a million dollars. In Utah, however, the owners of the factory did not own the bulk of the land in the surrounding district. Up to this time it had seemed to me that the only protection accorded to the rural districts went to a small class of wealthy people having little in common with ordinary farmers. The sugar land in Louisiana has

nearly all been forced into the hands of the owners of the factories, because there is no profit in raising the cane if it must be shipped to distant factories, and no small farmer can build a factory of his own. The protection we accord to cane-sugar growers, therefore, is essentially protection to manufacturers. The protection accorded to lumber is now notoriously protection to the owners of great stretches of timber lands, and not to men who even reside on farms. Even the protection to wool is largely protection to the men and companies controlling the great ranges, for few ordinary farmers raise more wool than goes into the woollen goods they must buy. In the beet-sugar industry, however, I found an instance of protection from which small farmers receive a benefit. Of the \$750,000 invested by the sugar company at Lehi only \$150,000 was invested in land. For its beets the company relied on the independent small farmers of the State. Its employees, however, looked after the planting of the seed, and advised the farmers when to lay in their crops. The first year it was in operation the factory netted a loss of \$60,000, chiefly because the beets were inferior. They had averaged but 11 per cent. sugar, as against 14 per cent. sugar in the seed-beets planted. From certain parts of certain farms, however, the beets averaged 17 per cent. sugar, and the best of these beets the company was now using for seed. As a result of this and other improvements made, the whole crop was now averaging 16 per cent.



sugar—or more than the imported beets first used. As the cost of extracting the sugar is practically the same for each ton of beets whether much or little is extracted, the profits of the factory have greatly increased as the beets have improved in quality. The factory was established in 1891, and for several years past its dividends have been 10 per cent. It runs steadily four or five months each year, the men working twelve hours a day and receiving \$1.80, with 10 per cent. bonus whenever the mill's product exceeds 400 tons a day, which is now the rule. Unlike the Louisiana mills, to which many of the hands "hoboe" their way from all over the country when the season opened, these Utah mills get their labour from the neighbouring farms—the same men year after year.

Nearly every farm in the region had from five to ten acres in sugar-beets. One man, said the Bishop, could look after ten acres, and raise fifteen tons to the acre. This would mean 150 tons, for which the factory paid the local farmers \$4.25 a ton, and those more remote \$4.40. This discrimination naturally aroused protest, but the Bishop excused his company for paying the neighbouring farmers less than their beets were worth, by pointing out that the farmers too remote to haul their beets to the mill had to pay forty cents freight, and therefore got but \$4 net. It proved, he said, that the local farmers could afford to sell for less; but he himself did not for any such reason sell sugar to the local farmers for less than he charged his remote cus-



tomers. Even at the figure paid, however, the money incomes from these little farms—about \$600 from ten acres—are unusual for farmers in any part of the country; and I was not surprised to find that land here had risen from \$50 an acre in 1892 to \$100 in 1898. I talked afterwards with a beet-sugar farmer, who reckoned the income from beet-raising at a somewhat lower figure than the Bishop had done, and brought out vividly the enormous amount of drudgery involved, and the danger of a total loss of the crop. But in the main the Bishop's figures stood examination, and there was not the slightest question in any one's mind that the danger of losing the crop was incomparably less where the water was supplied by irrigation than where it came from the clouds. If the nation continues to pay for sugar sixty per cent. more than the natural price in order to raise it itself, rather than export profitable crops to buy it abroad, there is no doubt that the irrigated lands of the West will become the centre of a great sugar-growing industry.

But, as I have said, these industrial matters interested me vastly less than those which related to education and social life. Wherever I went I visited the schools. Here at Lehi I found them well housed and well attended. The curriculum was excellent. In the highest grammar grade the children were reading Longfellow's "Evangeline," and showed most encouraging independence in the explanations they ventured to different passages. The teachers,

however, with possibly one exception, were distinctly inferior. The same was generally true of the teachers in the district schools about Bountiful. One of them bungled fearfully in an attempt to explain to his pupils why the ocean cooled more slowly than the land. Nearly all were deficient in general culture. Nevertheless, there was here one shining exception, and she, curiously enough, was a daughter of Congressman Brigham H. Roberts. In case she was the daughter who accompanied her father at Washington, the newspaper interviewers were even more imaginative than usual in their reports. As a teacher, she was in every way one of the best I had seen in any part of the country. The general inferiority of the Mormon teachers in the public schools was partly explained by a Gentile teacher in Salt Lake City, who said that the best teaching material was taken for the Church schools. The principal reason, however, to my mind, is that the converts to Mormonism, with few exceptions, are among the poor and uneducated. The supply of adults who can teach, and are not missionaries, is therefore exceedingly limited; yet there is a much wider demand for teachers for the children than there is, for example, in the city of New York. There at Lehi, where the teachers seemed to me so ordinary, the agent of a travelling library system told me that the placing of libraries among reading circles in Utah was much easier than in his old State of Pennsylvania, though less easy than in Iowa and Montana. The Bishop who had

given the morning to me had given this young man a great help in his work, and the books in the system introduced were precisely those which a good teacher of literature and citizenship would recommend for any part of the country. Still more closely within the Church was the Mutual Improvement Society, which, I was told, kept up consecutive courses in civil government, literature, the drama, and theology. In Salt Lake City there were six hundred and forty pupils in the high school, though the city contained but sixty thousand people. Massachusetts or Ohio cities of the same size can rarely show a better record. Of these high-school pupils more than half were non-Mormon; but at the Mormon University, within the city limits, there were about two hundred city students in the preparatory or normal grades. When it is recalled that the labouring class of Salt Lake City is chiefly Mormon, the general desire shown by the people for a higher education is in the highest degree remarkable. The assimilation of the State to the general intellectual life of the Nation is going on with astonishing rapidity.

All this educational activity is, I think, rapidly undermining Mormonism. One highly educated Mormon apostate told me that the old faith was rapidly losing its hold, and that those who abandoned it almost universally became infidels. Members of their hierarchy admitted the growing irreligion of the wealthier classes. One acute Gentile observer went so far as to say that the sending

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out of missionaries weakened Mormonism, for "they never come back the same men they go out." When they are treated in a Christian way they are inevitably broadened. Nothing that came within my observation led me to believe that Mormonism was a growing power in Utah; and some of the forces working against Mormonism—especially the desire for wealth, which welcomed Gentile immigration, and the social ambition which prescribed conformity—were so distinctively irreligious that I sometimes feared that the old religion was breaking down too rapidly, and that there was danger that the younger generation would be given over to blank materialism.

Even now there are signs of moral retrogression. The general level of morality is unquestionably high. Inquiry at police headquarters confirmed the Mormon claim that the Mormon population hardly figured at all among those arrested for crime or disorder, or among those who ministered for gain to criminal and vicious tastes. But the statistics were the least trustworthy signs of the high morality. The real evidence of it was in the care for the poor, the temperance, the thrift, and the public spirit, that were apparent. There was, however, one point upon which the impression revived was distinctly unfavourable, and this was the supremely important matter of sexual morality. Just before my visit one of the foremost Apostles of the Church, at a meeting in the Tabernacle, had bravely condemned this growing evil, and made sweeping charges of un-


chastity against the members of the great choir. These charges I regarded as fanatical, and I am glad to note that he subsequently retracted them in large part. But what I heard from frank and conscientious Mormons in deprecation of these charges, even more than what I heard from Gentiles in their support, convinced me that the sin of polygamy in the fathers was bearing its fitting fruit in an epidemic of sexual immorality among the children. I do not wish to overstate the case. According to Mormons who admitted the seriousness of the situation, it was much worse in Salt Lake City than in any of the rural districts, and the Mormons in Salt Lake City were apt to be given the credit for the immorality of adventuresses from other States. Nevertheless the impressions I received in the streets and from the testimony of scandal-hating people, without regard to creed, convinced me that sexual morality in Utah was much lower than in any other American community I had visited, and but little higher than in Continental Europe.

Polygamy, however, is dying. It was becoming a scandal before the enforcement of the Edmunds Law, and President Woodruff's revelation in 1890 gave it its death-blow. One orthodox Mormon bachelor said to me, with evident feeling: "Polygamy wasn't abolished a bit too soon. It seems to have been all right for the old fellows, but for a few years before the manifesto against it, things were getting disgraceful. Old men who couldn't

Polygamy  
is dying

support one wife were going about the country picking up all the finest girls in sight." Of course he laughed as he said this, but there was clearly serious observation behind it. The polygamists could marry the finest girls. Just as the finest girls in the Catholic Church can the most easily be led to take the veil, so the finest girls in the Mormon Church could most easily be led into a polygamous marriage. Another orthodox Mormon, a young man of great personal refinement, whose beautiful wife is the daughter of one of the more famous Apostles, told me that his wife would have preferred to marry a polygamist, "though," he added, "she would not now wish me to take another wife." She, however, belongs to the younger generation, and is in close touch with the Gentile world. At Bountiful, the sweet-faced old lady who protested against my host's blocking the project for a public water-supply told me with all seriousness that she had often urged her husband to take another wife, but that he had always replied that one was enough for him. Among the women the teaching of the Church had an astonishing hold, but among the young men—particularly those who were in touch with Gentile thought—the revolt against polygamy was under way before the revolution came.

The revolution is now accomplished. Polygamous relations entered into before the manifesto of 1890 are not at an end, but new polygamous marriages are not being solemnized. I know that this statement is disputed by those Utah Gentiles who show their love of



their own religion by their hatred of the religion of their neighbours ; but the statements of this class rarely stood examination. On my return from Bountiful I was told by a moderate opponent of Mormonism that he knew a Mormon in Bountiful who had taken a second wife since the manifesto. When I asked if he meant Doctor —, he said yes ; and when I asked if he knew of any other case of the sort, he said no. I had seen Doctor —, and my Mormon escort had told me about him just what this Gentile critic now said : this doctor had entered into a polygamous relationship since the manifesto, but the Church in Utah had not given its sanction. If illicit relations without the sanction of Church or State constitute polygamous marriages, then polygamous marriages are still being entered into in Utah, but they are also being entered into elsewhere. A healthy public sentiment urgently needs to be generated, but this need is one which religion alone can create, and which the abuse of the Mormon sect will only retard.

The third day I was in Salt Lake City it was my fortune to become almost intimately acquainted with an agnostic Mormon belonging to the inner circle of the old hierarchy. We had worked together in a cause having no relation with the Mormon faith, and the interests we had in common led him to tell me his own position, and how the various changes had affected his own family. "A little over ten years ago," he said, "Delegate Cannon returned from Washington and told

several of the leaders that the anti-polygamy agitation was gathering headway, and that the Church must bend, or suffer an unending conflict. At a conference attended by Jacob Sharp, a director of the Union Pacific ; Delegate Cannon ; my brother-in-law, and a few others, it was decided that the Church should bend and that those present should promise to obey the law. Director Sharp was the first man tried after this conference ; but when he stated in court that he would obey the law, a perfect whirlwind of indignation swept over the State, compelling Sharp's excommunication, and making the other leaders afraid to follow his example. Yet Jacob Sharp has since been buried with all the honours of the Church. If President Woodruff's revelation against polygamy had come even a year earlier, there would have been another tempest, and the Church would have repudiated it. Coming when it did, it was submitted to, and now a majority, at least of the men, indorse it. When I recall how things were fifteen years ago, and see how they are to-day, the change seems absolutely miraculous. When Taylor said in court, in the early eighties, that he would ' nail to the mast the colours of Mormonism ' and cling to his wives in defiance of the Government, fifty thousand Mormons poured into Salt Lake City to do him honour. Yet, in the early nineties, President Woodruff and Counsellor Cannon were able to tell the court that they neither ' favoured nor wished for ' a return of polygamy. No one who knows anything about the slowness with which social changes



take place, particularly when religious sympathies are enlisted, could have hoped for a more rapid transformation." In this view I heartily concur.

## X

### THE NORTHERN FARM


EMERSON said, with pardonable exaggeration—before the immigration from the Continent set in—that the East was merely new England, and that “America begins with the Alleghanies.” With far less <sup>Where America begins</sup> exaggeration, it may be said to-day that our cities are merely new Europe, and that “America begins with the rural districts.”

Before going to the Northwest to study farm-life there, I spent three days in as many rural communities in Maine, Vermont, and New York. So far as agricultural conditions were concerned, I hardly did more than break ground for my later inquiries. But I came back with a vivid impression of the Americanism of the rural districts which Western observation merely confirmed. The contrast with New York, where most of our foreign critics think they find America, was sharp in the extreme. In this city less than one person in four is of American parentage. In the rural districts less than one in four has any recollection of an immigrant ancestor. In this city there is almost the European separation of the rich and poor. The great wealth is

the wealth of the few. Barely one family in four owns either its home or any industrial property whatever. In the rural districts the average wealth is small, but it is a common wealth. Less than one family in four is a tenant, and even the tenants usually own the stock and implements with which they do their work. Out of this economic independence and equality not only American political democracy but American social democracy has sprung.

The social democracy permeates the whole people. The most conservative feel its spirit more than the majority of European Socialists. Not only all men but nearly all women treat each other without  
Social  
democracy arrogance and without servility. This generalization was strikingly illustrated by my own experiences. In the family with which my host in Maine was boarding, the servant was one of the most attractive members of an exceptionally attractive household. She was an orphan girl of a family as poor as those from which city servants come, but she was attending the village academy and "helping" with the housework for her board. Not only was she made one of the family in outward form, but in feeling as well as in conduct the Golden Rule was obeyed. In Vermont I stopped at the village hotel, but when I drove about through the country districts I found that the same young woman would sometimes teach school for a term or two, then "help" a neighbour, and again return to teaching when the opportunity

presented. Her wages in either work were about the same, for the supply of school-teachers in New England farming districts has reduced salaries to two-thirds the level in the far South. Five dollars a week was the common pay, and a dollar and a half of this had to be paid out for board from Monday to Friday—the teacher going home for Saturday and Sunday. When I went to the New York farm, I again found social democracy at the point most difficult to attain. The family I visited was remarkable for its culture. The wife was the author of a well-received text-book, and the husband was a scientific student as well as a practical farmer. Along with his scientific books I saw on his shelves my old friends, or rather enemies, Giffen's "Case Against Bimetallism" and Laughlin's "History of Bimetallism in the United States," together with well-studied official reports of currency conferences and silver literature galore. On his walls were good paintings from his own hand, and at the supper-table, when I unfortunately remarked that I read Whittier more than any other poet, I was asked if I had read this and that favourite of theirs, until I felt that I knew nothing about Whittier. They, on the other hand, had taken a Whittier pilgrimage the previous summer, visiting the scenes he depicted. Yet in this intellectual family the help was treated as a friend. The only place in these visits to the rural districts where I ran across anything of the European caste spirit even toward servants was in the Vermont town, where one lady spoke to me



somewhat scornfully of the custom of treating servants as we would treat one another. This lady, however, was in touch with several rich New York families who had summer residences in Windsor. The town, as a whole, was almost an ideal American community, with its beautiful free schools, its well-selected town library, its numerous churches, its well-shaded, saloon-free streets, and, above all, its attractive homes—most of them owned by the families who lived in them, and nearly all such as a college boy or girl might come from or take friends to without loss of pride. Altogether my visits to the rural districts in the East, the small towns as well as the farms, impressed upon me vividly the almost universal independence, self-respect, and inability to look up or down upon our fellows, that has from the first been the very life of American democracy. Compared with these communities, our cities are merely new Europe. America begins with the rural districts.

The rural districts I visited in the West were in Minnesota—one of the few States where immigrants form a large part of the rural population. In these districts the greater Americanism of the West, of which Emerson spoke, was chiefly marked in the more rapid Americanizing of the immigrant elements. The American farmers were, indeed, more alert, aggressive, and self-reliant than those I met in the East or South—always excepting the exceptional farmer I visited in New York. But this difference was

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less pronounced than the difference in the immigrants West and East. The American farmer who really introduced me to farm life in the Northwest made the boast that "only the better and more independent class of immigrants come to Minnesota to farm." The one poorer class that came to Minnesota at all, he said, were the Poles, and they settled in the towns "to be somebody's hands." In the rural districts, apart from the people from Canada and Great Britain, who counted as Americans, two-thirds of the immigrants were Scandinavians, and the remainder generally Germans. It was the Scandinavians whom I kept meeting, and all that I saw and most that I heard confirmed my host's generalizations about them. It seemed to be the universal verdict that they were superior to any other class of immigrants in intelligence, in ambition for their children, and in openness to American ideas. At the State Agricultural School they had nearly as large a representation, proportionately, as the Americans, and at the State Universities both in Minnesota and North Dakota their representation, though less, was strikingly large. But even this invasion of the universities was less impressive than their distinctively American attitude toward the temperance question. In Minnesota I found that the total-abstinence movement had a strong hold among them, and in North Dakota my day's visit to Grand Forks showed me that the greater part of them heartily indorsed complete prohibition, which is thoroughly enforced in that thriving town. In Massachusetts I



had been encouraged by the complete assimilation of the children of the immigrants, but among the Scandinavians in the Northwest the process had made extraordinary headway among the immigrants themselves.

By reason of their thrift, the Scandinavians seemed to get ahead, in point of wealth, more rapidly than the Americans. They are not yet, as a rule, so well-to-do; their houses are not so good; their standard of living is not so high. But the advantage of the American farmer so far as prestige, comfort, and culture are concerned formed a positive disadvantage to them in meeting the requirements of hard times. As I drove about the country and talked with different farmers and asked about others, I heard of Scandinavians succeeding where Americans had failed. The failures of the latter were especially marked among those who had attempted to conduct "bonanza" farms. But the American farmers who ran behind were not confined to this class. The years of extreme depression just preceding my visit had seen a good many independent small farmers driven to the wall. Many Scandinavians may have lost everything, but along the roads on which I was driven first in southern, then in central, and afterwards in northern Minnesota there was never a chance reference to a Scandinavian who had been forced to give up his farm. Two whom I talked with together in a wheat-field—one was helping the other with his threshing—spoke with pride of the kind of start they had had. One of them, a man of forty, had begun in the district with

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less than a dollar, and now owned a quarter-section (160 acres). The other, a somewhat older man, said that he had started out with \$22 in cash, and a cow bought on credit. The first season the cow was all that kept his family from starving, his wife selling butter to buy what was absolutely necessary from the stores. Now he had paid for one quarter-section and bought another, on which he and his three boys would pay a thousand dollars the present year. His two sections, though he did not appraise them, must have been worth eight or nine thousand dollars.

In getting ahead so rapidly these hard-working and hard-saving farmers had been helped by what the single-taxers call the unearned increment. Regarding land values the Populists in Minnesota were much more cheerful than Republicans in the East. In Vermont Republican farmers had told me of farms selling for one-half and even one-quarter of their prices twenty-five years ago, and in New York my silver host offered me a ninety-acre farm—just fifty miles from the city and less than two miles from the Hudson—for \$1,800. In 1880 it had sold for \$6,000, but he had lately been compelled to accept it in payment of a mortgage of \$1,400 and the interest in arrears. At the sale, he said, he was the only bidder, and he would gladly sell the farm for exactly what it had cost him. The fact that his \$1,400 mortgage had come to be worth more than his neighbour's \$6,000 farm illustrated the injustice of the gold standard to

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debtor farmers. When I went to Minnesota, where silver men were the rule among the American farmers, though rare among the Swedes, I expected to hear more such stories. But I heard none of them. When men talked of falling prices, it was always of the prices for farm products, never of the prices for farm land. Even during the terrible depression from 1893 to 1896, when many debtor farmers lost their land to their creditors, the price of farms at a free sale was never materially lower than before. Improved farms were worth \$25 and \$30 an acre, that ten years before would not have brought half these figures, and twenty years ago hardly a quarter. No one, however, spoke of this advance as an "unearned increment"; and an open-minded single-taxer might have found it difficult to convince himself that the increment was "unearned." The men who had obtained it, as a rule, were the pioneers who had gone to the frontier and worked for years in isolation, not only in improving their own land, but in making the roads and paying the taxes for the schools that made the section desirable to later comers. It was their labour that paved the way for railroads and stores and banks. To tax the earlier settlers for the benefits they received from the later would be less just than to tax the later settlers for the benefits they received from the earlier. The single tax upon land values may continue to make headway among thoughtful people in cities, who get their views from what they read, but it can get no hold among thoughtful people

in the country, who get their views from what they see. East of the Mississippi River it is the unearned decrement that is making farmers think ; and west of that river, where the increment still arises, every farmer believes it to have been paid for with harder work and heavier taxes than the increment that has come to capital in railroads, or banks or even stores and manufactories. The Western farms are the stronghold of economic radicalism, but the instinctive radicalism there takes the form of the progressive taxation of large holdings of property of every kind, and not the single tax upon the value of land.

Nor is it simply concern for their own vested interests that makes Western farmers hostile to the single-tax proposal. In spite of their pronounced sympathy with the public ownership of mon-  
A representative farmer  
opolies, the ideal of individual independence seems to have a more profound hold upon them than upon supposedly less socialistic people in Eastern cities. Their attitude toward the private ownership of land came out concretely the first day I spent on a Minnesota farm. My host was the superintendent of farmers' institutes, and his farm was a State experiment station. When my friends at Marshall told me that he was the best man in the region to tell me about farming conditions in Minnesota, I accepted their advice with some reluctance, as I feared a man full of his own ideas, who would tell me what Minnesota farmers ought to think, instead of what they did think. To my delight, I



found a man whose marked characteristics were common sense, common sympathy, and belief in the people whom it was his work to teach. Then, and afterwards, he seemed to me to personify the finer type of Western farmers, and when I think of almost any farming theme, his attitude toward it is likely to recur to me. We did not in so many words discuss the single tax, but his feeling toward it was made clear when we spoke of the sale of the State school lands. Originally in Minnesota, as in most of the Western States, sections 16 and 36 in every township—two square miles out of the thirty-six—were reserved for the State school fund. Much of this land in Minnesota remains unsold, and the question came up whether the State would not do better to keep it in the public possession. My host's answer was an unquestioning "no." "The State has done better," he said, "to sell the lands outright than to lease them. . . . A better class of citizens is attracted, and better work secured in making improvements." I do not care to discuss whether he was right, or whether a single-tax lease freeing the tenant from all taxation upon his improvements would secure as enterprising settlers and as good financial results to the State. Be that as it may, my host's view was the typical one of Western farmers. They not only oppose the public ownership of land now in private hands, but they believe in the private ownership of land now held by the public. Mineral lands alone—whose development does not depend upon the owner of the soil—constitute an exception.

There is only one thing that can alter the intense individualism of Western farmers, and that is the menace of monopoly. When I thought of the belief in the East that Western farmers were saturated with State Socialism, it was almost amusing to study my host's ingrained feeling against it. He was the firmest kind of an anti-monopolist, and was ready to look to the State not only to protect the public against extortion, but also to carry forward work requiring general co-operation. He believed, for example, in State insurance against hail, but this was simply because the voluntary co-operation of farmers could not furnish it. Voluntary co-operation, he said, enabled neighbouring farmers in many parts of Minnesota to insure one another against fire. The expenses were almost *nil*, as there were no agents, no profits, and the officers served without salaries. The burning of one barn or farmhouse never involved another, and therefore there was no difficulty about meeting assessments to repair losses. The path of a hail-storm, however, was too wide for neighbours to insure one another, but State insurance would always enable the prospering to help the suffering, for the hail-storm prostrated relatively few localities. Yet this readiness to look to the State as a public servant in no way altered my host's deep repugnance to the thought of the State as master and all the citizens its employees. This feeling came out clearly when we discussed civil-service reform. He believed in civil-service reform, but he believed in it to protect


Western  
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the public against political corruption. To the civil servants whom it protected in office he feared that it was a positive evil. It was in danger of making them routine men and "weaklings." "There are people," he said, "who like to spend their lives as government clerks, but it doesn't develop the qualities that come from independence and individual responsibility." The Western farms, he believed, contained the finest body of citizens in the country, partly because only people who had "resources in themselves" were attracted by the life, but chiefly because pioneer farmers were thrown upon their own resources and required from boyhood to do innumerable things for themselves without supervision. This training, it became clear to me, has developed among Western farmers a passion for individual independence and individual initiative that makes their individualism a more fundamental characteristic than the socialism evoked by their struggle with monopoly.

But the training that comes to the Western farmers from the necessities of pioneer farm life is only a part of the education that makes them superior, as a class, to any city working people whom I met. When I entered the house of my host—and this experience was repeated three times thereafter—almost the first thing that caught my eye was a good-sized library. When I got nearer the bookcase, the books that seemed to have seen the most service were the works of Charles Darwin and Commentaries on the Scriptures. My host had begun life as a Methodist


minister, and when the current of his own religious thought had led him to leave the ministry he did not cease to be either a student or a preacher. For years he had given his unpaid services to building up his church out on the frontier, and his religious life had deepened as he had gone on with the scientific studies that had started his independent course. He did not tell me that his religious life had deepened, but I felt it as I went about with him on the farm, and still more I felt it when, the next morning, he led in family prayers. This service followed breakfast, and the prayer was just a continuation, on a higher plane, of our conversation at the breakfast-table. Rarely have I heard a prayer like it in religious feeling, and never one quite like it in theme. It was the conversation of a man talking with God about political evils, and asking for openness of heart to receive His truth. When he prayed that, as citizens, we might struggle for the righting of public wrongs, might learn God's way by trying to do his will, and might see God working out a higher order of society, bringing greater good to the greatest number, the air became charged with religious emotion as I had never known it to be except when hearts had been touched by the deepest experiences of life. The manly, straightforward appeal for guidance in public affairs, that we might work with God for the bettering of society, had a converting power such as few appeals for personal help possess, even when made in the presence of sorrow or death.



Such was the man to whom the University of Minnesota turned, about ten years ago, when the dissatisfaction of farmers with its agricultural department threatened a division of the State appropriation. It was decided that, since the farmers could not or would not go to the University, the University must go to the farmers, and Mr. Gregg was put in charge of the work. "Institutes" lasting several days were arranged for in different parts of the State, where practical farm problems were discussed in the light of practical experience. Mr. Gregg had had the practical experience himself, and he employed as his associates only men who united practical experience with wide reading of experiments in laboratories and farms all over the world. The educational fetich that intellectual activity can best be stimulated by studies far removed from practical life and thought was utterly discarded. At first the attendance at the institutes was small, but when those who came found that their questions were answered by men who had met the same difficulties as themselves in every-day farm-life, the deep-seated and often justifiable prejudice against scientific farming began to give way. The attendance at the institutes rapidly grew, until in many sections institute week came to resemble county-fair week. The farmers came with their families from miles around, and stayed until the institute was over, hearing the lectures, watching the experiments, questioning the lecturers, and themselves answering questions out of their own experience. In both central and northern

Minnesota I inquired about these institutes, or heard about them without inquiry, and the testimony was so strongly in their favour that Minnesota seemed to me to be solving the problem of educating farmers, instead of educating men away from the farms. I did not have an opportunity to attend one of the institutes, but when, a few months later, I read Prince Kropotkin's glowing account of the intellectual superiority of Iowa farmers over those of the Old World, as shown by the attendance and discussions at the "farmers' meetings," his enthusiasm seemed to me justified. Many of the American farmers in Minnesota do not belong to "America's working people," if that phrase covers only distinctively manual workers. They take as much scientific interest in their work, and do as much serious reading, as most city physicians or editors.

The reflex influence of the institutes upon the University has also been invaluable. To have men from the University lecturing in different parts of the State every year has naturally quickened the <sup>Minnesota</sup> <sup>schools</sup> interest in agricultural education, and to have men at the universities in touch with the farmer and pursuing agricultural science, not for "science's sake," but for the sake of the farmers, has made the instruction there healthful and inspiring. The "Farm School" at Minnesota University is the most prosperous in the United States, and has an attendance of nearly five hundred young men and women. When I passed through Minneapolis, I went to see one of the






professors, and had a glimpse of co-education. I had visited one or two Eastern colleges for girls, but I thought that I had never seen so large a proportion of good-looking and attractive-looking young women as came along the walks, talking without constraint and without excitement with the young men who were with them. It seemed the natural way of living, and I felt sure that the prejudice of the fashionable world against co-education would soon have to follow the prejudice of the same world a few years ago against any form of higher education for girls. This generalization I afterwards verified with some care at the University of North Dakota, but to elaborate it would take me away from the thread of my story. My agricultural professor, Mr. T. L. Haecker, proved to be even a greater enthusiast than I had anticipated. I came in upon him at an inopportune time, but when he found that I wished to verify some loose generalizations about the cost of food for dairy cattle and the amount of butter that could be counted on, he gladly turned over to me elaborate records showing just how much it cost to feed each cow in the University dairy farm and just what product it gave. He had as much scientific enthusiasm over these tables as a classical professor would have over a new edition of a Greek play, and with reason, for the results had human interest. The tables showed that the University cows were producing three hundred and fifty pounds of butter a year as against an average of two hundred and fifty for the cows on ordinary

farms, and that the best food for dairy purposes was bran, the cheapest product of the farm. Enthusiasm of this sort for practical knowledge was at the bottom of the success of the agricultural department, and it seemed to extend to every phase of farm work. The students were given a course in veterinary science, with especial reference to the diseases of farm animals; courses in botany and entomology, with especial reference to farm pests; and courses in carpentering and blacksmithing, which enabled them to repair their barns, shoe their horses, and keep their machinery in order. A kind of culture was given which every farmer would value and carry further in after-life. Tuition was free; board was furnished at cost—a trifle less than three dollars a week—and the school year was begun in October and closed the last of March, so that vacation wages could cover all term expenses. Equality of opportunity for the highest education was never carried further.

Most of the work of the farm institutes was, of course, technical, but there was a part of it which I was able to appreciate. The institute lecturers made it their business to preach co-operative dairies, <sup>Co-operative dairies</sup> and to prepare the way for them by teaching their audiences how to select dairy cattle, and care for their cream. Superintendent Gregg spoke so warmly of the success of this form of co-operation that I inquired where, on my way to the Red River Valley, I would find a good dairy district. At his suggestion I




stopped at Litchfield, and saw for myself an American experiment in co-operation almost as remarkable as that of the Rochdale Pioneers in England.

I reached the Litchfield creamery at four o'clock in the afternoon, just as the young Danish superintendent was about to leave for the day. He proved to be another enthusiast—Minnesota seemed full of such people—and for an hour he talked with me, really explaining every part of the system. The creamery had cost \$3,200, and handled about 20,000 pounds (pints) of milk a day. The farming district from which milk was brought to the Litchfield creamery was only five or six miles in radius, as there were other co-operative creameries in other parts of the county. It was not necessary for each farmer to haul his own milk to the creamery, but different farmers along the same road could take turns, and thus each would drive to the creamery hardly oftener than he would wish to come to town anyway. It was thus co-operation all along the line.

When the farmer brought in his milk, it was at once weighed, and when a sample had been taken it was poured into the common receiver. The farmer did not have to wait for the cream to be separated in order to get back his skim-milk to feed his stock. At once he received checks for the approximate weight of both the skim-milk and the buttermilk that would be due him, and these checks he immediately cashed by a simple automatic arrangement. The milk-check, for example,

varied in length according to the weight of milk it called for. If the farmer had brought 100 pounds of fresh milk, he was entitled to 85 pounds of skim-milk, and by shoving his long check through a slot he received exactly that amount. By a similar "check-in-the-slot" device he would get 10 pounds of butter-milk. No labour or even supervision was called for on the part of those in charge, and everything was so conveniently arranged that in a few minutes the farmer drove away with all that was coming to him except the payment for his cream.


From a hundred pounds of milk about five pounds of butter could be made. The milk varied so much in quality, however, that the farmers were not paid according to quantity, but according to the amount of "butter-fat" contained. Each farmer had a separate glass jar in which the samples from his milk were preserved till the end of the month, and then tested. At the time of my visit the price paid for "butter-fat" was eighteen cents a pound, and the average payment to the farmers for their milk was seventy-one cents a hundred pounds; but some farmers would get barely sixty cents, and some nearly ninety cents, according to the richness of their milk. Sometimes, said Superintendent Sondergaard, it had been necessary to return the farmers their milk; in which case, he said, they explained to the farmer as pleasantly as they could how he should keep his milk to avoid its absorbing odours or otherwise deteriorating. In this way the creamery



served as an educator to its patrons, and thus supplemented the work of the "Dairy Institutes."

Regarding the machinery in the creamery little need be said except that everything was immaculately clean. Superintendent Sondergaard made no loose boasts about the "wonderful economies" of improved machinery over the ordinary farm implements, but stated clearly the exact amount of the saving. On one hundred pounds of milk the farmers' skimming of the natural cream lost one-half pound of the butter-fat contained, or nine cents; the creamery's separator reduced the loss to one-tenth of a pound, or less than two cents. The rest of the machinery used, he said, did not make better butter than the best dairywomen made by the old hand-churns, but it made a uniformly high grade, for which there was an immediate and certain market. The Litchfield creamery, he told me with some pride, had taken the first prizes, at two State fairs. Its butter usually brought twenty cents a pound at St. Paul. He showed me the price-list for butter in a daily paper, disclosing that the market recognises as much difference between butter and butter as it does between eggs and eggs. The prices ranged from twenty and one-half cents a pound down to four or five. Before the co-operative creamery was built most of the farmers had sold their butter as "packing-butter" for about twelve cents a pound.

The next day I drove into the country to learn how the farmers looked at this remarkable experiment, and



I came back thinking even better of it than when I set out. The most critical farmer I met admitted that the creamery had been a great gain to his wife, though he insisted—and my escort thought justly—that she could make better butter than the creamery. The best talk I had was with the farmer who was the first president of the creamery association. He gave me the history of the experiment from the beginning, and pointed out the financial gain which the creamery had brought even to farmers who used to make “better” butter at home. The farmers of the whole district, he said, were now “planting less wheat and raising more.” The great increase in their dairy farms made possible by the creamery had enabled them to enrich their land with manure, so that the yield of wheat had been increased from about fifteen bushels an acre to nearly twenty-five bushels. The value of land had gone up proportionately. It is now selling, he said, at thirty dollars an acre, while a few years ago the selling value was less than half that sum. “The creameries have enriched our land and relieved our wives’ slavery.”

The history of the local creamery was, briefly, as follows: Mr. Ames and nine others had given their note for \$3,100 to erect the plant, and the stock, issued in fifty-dollar shares, was distributed among the farmers in the neighbourhood—no one receiving more than two shares. This stock was paid for by the stockholders accepting a deduction of five dollars a month for each

The dairy  
farmer's  
view of it




share from their payment for the milk they took to the creamery. In ten months the stock was all paid for in this way, and the note given to the builders of the plant cancelled. Since that time repairs had been kept up, some new machinery had been purchased, and dividends had been paid to the co-operators averaging fifty per cent. a year.

These results seem almost incredible, but Professor Haecker at the State University assured me that fifty per cent. was less rather than more than the ordinary dividends realized by the co-operative dairies of the State. Mr. Ames gave me some detailed figures regarding the running expenses, which supplemented those previously given by the superintendent in such a way as to show that each had been accurate in his statements. To those who are fond of figures the balance-sheet of the Litchfield creamery may be interesting. The butter made amounted to nearly one thousand pounds a day, which sold for \$200 gross, or \$180 after paying expressage and other selling expenses. The yearly receipts were thus about \$50,000. The expenses were \$75 a month to the superintendent, \$30 a month to each of his two assistants, and about \$125 a month for fuel, etc., making a total of about \$3,000 a year. All the balance was paid to those furnishing the milk, except a "sinking fund" of five cents on every hundred pounds of milk, which, by the rules of the Co-operative Dairy Associations, goes to the bettering of the plant and the payment of divi-

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dends. At Litchfield this sinking-fund payment is nearly \$10 a day, or \$3,000 a year. About half of it has uniformly been devoted to repairs and new machinery, and the other half to the payment of the fifty per cent. dividends.

I went from Litchfield to the Red River Valley to investigate "bonanza farms." Ever since David A. Wells, in his "Recent Economic Changes," published <sup>The bonanza farms</sup> about ten years ago, urged that the prices of farm products were being reduced by the cheaper methods of production employed on the great ranches, the impression has been circulated far and wide that in agriculture as in manufacturing "the big fish are eating up the little ones," and that the independent small farm is soon to be a thing of the past. From the time I entered Minnesota till the time I left North Dakota—the supposed fields of gold for the great wheat-ranches—I heard not a single fact that even seemed to support the prevalent Eastern theory. In southern Minnesota everybody I asked agreed that the large farms had been the least successful, and Superintendent Gregg assured me that all over the State the big farms were gradually being broken up into smaller ones. On the railroad car north, my first travelling companion proved to be the agent of one of the very large land companies in the western part of the State, and when I asked him about the profitability of farming on a large scale, he said that his company had now adopted the policy of selling its land to small farmers. He did not, indeed,





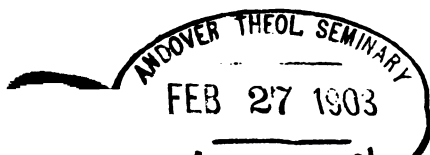
depict the "bonanza" farm as hopeless, but he recognised that it was less profitable than the small farm managed and tilled by its owner. When I reached the Red River Valley, where the large farms are still the rule, this judgment was universally confirmed. The great estates of that region are doomed to disintegration. The great wheat-ranch cannot compete with the small diversified farm. In agriculture the big fish are furnishing food for the little ones.

The morning I reached Crookston I drove out to the agricultural experiment station to present a letter of introduction which Superintendent Gregg had given me to Professor Hoverstad. Never was letter received more cordially, or by a person better able to help me. For two days he devoted himself to making me understand the agricultural situation in the district. He was a young Norwegian, six feet three inches tall, with fair face and blue eyes, and with a sincerity and simplicity of manner that to me were singularly attractive. The first afternoon we drove about to the large farms within easy reach. One of these farms gave me a complete picture of the possible waste of farming on a large scale by means of machinery. Its owner was an enthusiast on the subject of new machinery, and around his great barnyard, exposed to the weather and in some cases partly covered with manure, was a broken line of costly machines stretching several hundred feet. I asked my escort how long machines would last with that kind of care, and he replied, not more than five years at most.

I then asked how many weeks each year the farmer used the costlier machines, and found that a month was usually a maximum. In this month the machines must save enough labour to offset wear and tear and interest for the whole year. We did not go in to talk with the farmer whose yards presented this remarkable spectacle, but instead pressed on several miles to talk with a large farmer of exceptional energy and intelligence, who never allowed things to run "at loose ends." When I asked this farmer why the large farms were breaking up into small ones, he put the whole case in a single picturesque phrase. "There are," he said, "only two sure crops in this country—ice and children; and the small farmer has the children." The profit of a farm does not come from the cultivation of great stretches of wheat with men hired for the season, but from the cheap rent and cheap food for the farmer's own family, and the constant employment of its members the whole year through in looking after the by-products of butter and eggs, fruit and meat, and turning the waste from one part of the farm into the enrichment of another. The big farmers could not hire help to do this work satisfactorily—especially from the roving class that preferred to work on the big farms. "We always have to have three crews of men," said the farmer I have just quoted—"one coming, one working, and one going." The attention a big farm got from these shifting hands could not develop it like the attention a small farm got from its owner.


The next day we took the train for Euclid, to visit the great "Keystone" farm. Fortunately for my purpose, the manager was away for the day and we were forced to make all our inquiries from the men. For the absent manager I conceived a high regard. His was just such a farm as has been glowingly described in so many magazine articles lauding the new order of farming. There was a splendid array of farm buildings, freshly painted in white and red, and everything about the place indicated perfect equipment and perfect management. We reached it just at noon, when, at the tap of a bell, sixteen hands filed out of the "men's parlour," went to the stable, and presently emerged with five fine Norman horses each, which they took to the fields. One man with five horses and a gang-plough, I was told, could cover five acres in a day, or as much as two men with three horses apiece could cover with the ordinary single plough. Right here, then, was one of the vaunted economies of the new order: one man with five horses and a \$75 plough was doing as much as two men with six horses and a cheap plough. But here again closer questioning showed the common sense of the independent farmers, who for most fields preferred the single plough. The gang-plough did not do its work quite as well, and if the difference was only a bushel an acre there was a loss. The farmer who hired labour to cover immense areas preferred the gang-plough, but the farmer who did his own work on a small farm could

The hands  
on a big  
farm



well afford to give a few days more to his ploughing and get a larger yield. Another economy also for the small farm forced itself on my attention. The small farmer was always within a few minutes of his work. The hands on the ten-square-mile farm often had to walk a mile or two four times a day to reach theirs.

By this time, however, I was more interested in the life of the workmen than in the economic problems I came to investigate. Professor Hoverstad and I were asked to the table, which the men had just left, and had an excellent dinner. My own observation, therefore, did not confirm what I elsewhere heard about the inhuman treatment of hands on the great farms. After dinner we sat down in the "men's parlour" and talked to our heart's content with a group of three or four men who were "pressing hay," as they termed it. They were all on sick leave, but their wages, they said, were docked "just the same." Their attitude, however, was just the opposite of grumbling. After the fashion of men who do not entirely take you into their confidence, they were inclined to put the best face on things. They preferred, one or two of them said, to belong to the crew on a big farm to being the only hand on a small one. When I asked whether the small farmer didn't treat them as one of the family and share with them everything the family had, the answer was: "Yes, but the work is never done. There are so many more chores." Here they had "a ten-hour day." Afterwards, when they told about their day, their




reckoning of hours seemed quite liberal to their employer. On week-day mornings they got up at four o'clock; on Sundays, except in threshing-time, they got up at five. During threshing-time they worked on Sundays the same as other days and got "thresher's wages"—\$1.75 a day—instead of their regular \$20 a month. Before breakfast they had to look after their five horses. They were due in the fields at six, and from that hour they dated their day's work. They worked from six till eleven, when they started back to the barns. After dinner they were not called out again until 12:45, because the "horses have to have an hour to eat." They then worked till six. It generally took them nearly half an hour to bring their horses in, and nearly an hour to feed and bed them. By the time they had finished with the horses and had had their suppers it was often 8:30. To get up the next morning at four, most of them wanted to go to bed. Those who sat up awhile could talk or play checkers. No cards were allowed, and no liquor.

These last rules seemed to be rigidly enforced, and with the general consent of the men. In spite of this enforced morality, however, the life seemed demoralizing. The men were utterly cut off from family life, and from higher life of any form. They received a remarkable opportunity to lay up wages, but a more remarkable impulse to "blow them off" when they reached the city at the end of the season. Most of them went to the logging-camps for the winter, and

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the garrulous Irishman, who was the best talker in the group, assured us that the life there was even finer than on the big farm. "The food is good, the lodging just about as good as here [where they slept eighteen in a room]; the days are shorter, and we have cards at night." If David A. Wells's dream of the big farm driving the small farm to the wall were in danger of being realized, the future of Minnesota would look as dark as it now looks bright.


But the dream, or nightmare, is in no danger of being realized. Even this well-managed farm was not believed by the men to be profitable. Their evidence, it is true, was of little value, but there were many things to indicate heavy expenses which the small farmer's family saves him. At the time of my visit there were just forty people employed on these ten sections, where as many families might have cultivated independent farms of the typical Minnesota size. Of these forty, one was superintendent, one was foreman, one was stable-boss, one was dairy boss, one was gardener, one was blacksmith and mender, four were gardener's helpers, two were dairy helpers, four were stable-boys, three were women, and one was called "flunkey" by the aristocrats of the "men's parlour." Thus twenty out of the forty were either doing the work of supervision which the independent farmer does for himself, or else were doing the work in dairy and kitchen and garden and stable which the independent farmer's wife and children do for him.



But the best illustration of the advantages of the independent farms over the bonanza farms came to me while we were on our way to the "Keystone." When we reached Euclid, Professor Hoverstad told **A Populist minister** me that he wanted to take me to see a farmer near by whom he thought a great deal of and who was conducting a fairly large farm successfully. When we reached the farm, three unusually attractive little girls were playing in front of the house, and a man in working clothes of clerical cut came forward to meet us. One of my favourite prejudices is against a clerical dress, but before this man had spoken I realized that he wore it out of no desire to isolate himself by any broadening of phylacteries. It was a face of exceptional purity of thought and warmth of sympathy. When we entered the house, I noticed Farrar's and Robertson's sermons. I found that my host was still preaching in the little Episcopal church where he had ministered for years, though he supported his family by work on the farm and was President of the Euclid Farmers' Alliance. Before we had talked long I learned that he was an enthusiastic Populist. When I came away I took with me a spirited and sensible reply he had published to a Minnesota railway magnate's address before the Minnesota Editors' Association on the wonderful profitability of farming if the farmers would only give all their thought to their farms. The incompetency of the railroad man to discuss farming, and the absurdity of the great farming class letting the railroad officials and

editors do the governing, furnished my host with a field for telling satire. About the last thing an American farmer in Minnesota dreams of doing is allowing some other class do his political thinking.

Equally unwilling is he to let any other class think out his farm problems for him. There was a part of the conversation between Professor Hoverstad and Mr. Curry that I cannot help quoting, because of the light it threw on the question of the great <sup>A farm problem</sup> wheat-farm. They were not discussing this question, but what they said was none the less illuminating regarding it. Both of them had been asked by an agricultural paper to give their replies to a farmer who had written to the paper: "My wheat is decreasing, my weeds are increasing, and I have no money." A prominent college professor had already answered the farmer that he should borrow money and buy sheep. Both of my companions, who were practical farmers as well as scholars, agreed that to borrow money was the last thing the farmer should do. "Debt," said Mr. Curry, "is the very worst weed a farmer can get started on his farm. If a farmer goes in debt to buy sheep he will not only have his interest to keep up, but will probably lose thirty or forty per cent. of his investment before he learns how to take care of the sheep." Both men agreed that the first thing for the struggling farmer to do was to plant less wheat. "When you raise a ton of wheat worth fifteen dollars," said Professor Hoverstad, "you take five dol-






lars out of the soil." The single-crop wheat-farmer was bankrupting himself by using up his capital. The thing for him to do was to put a part of his wheat-land into pasture to enrich it, and a part into corn to get rid of the weeds. With fewer acres he would soon raise more wheat, and by diversifying his crop he would be able to work all the time, instead of having a pressure of work at the very times when labour was dearest and hardest to get. Finally, they agreed that the farmer should reduce expenditures to a minimum by looking after dairy and chickens and garden and pigs, and by learning to do all his own blacksmithing and repairing. The complete agreement of these men was not the agreement of politeness, but the expression of the common sense of practical farmers that only by diversified farming, intelligently managed so as to make every part fit in with every other, could a farm be made to pay. The remedies insisted upon for the small wheat-farmer who was running behind were all remedies which the great wheat-farmer cannot adopt, and they indicated as many reasons why the great farm, instead of cutting in two the cost of production, as Mr. Wells assumed, cannot be cultivated as economically as the small.

But the matter of supreme concern in all this was not the advantage of the small farm in the production of wealth, but its advantage in the production of character. The Curry farm was in no sense a bonanza farm. Coming to northwestern Minnesota in the early days, Mr. Curry had taken

The American farmer's family




up three quarter-sections of land—one under the homestead act, one under the pre-emption act, and the third under the timber-culture act—and later had bought another quarter-section for seventy-five dollars from a neighbour who was unable to keep up payments on a four-hundred dollar mortgage and unwilling to throw the land into the hands of the mortgagee. He had but a single son in his large family, yet the remarkable thing about his farm was his independence of hired help. Only one man was kept, except in the busy seasons. “My wife and girls,” he said, “until the older girls went away to school, took entire charge of the milking and butter-making.” This was perhaps the most important work of the farm, and was managed ideally. There was a herd of one hundred cows and calves, yet the cow-stable was planned with such economy that a small building housed them all, with each in a separate compartment. It was exquisitely kept, and just outside of each stall was a little tablet on which the product of each cow was recorded. The records equalled those of the State University dairy—eight pounds of butter a week, or three hundred and fifty pounds a year, being about the average. The dairy, like the co-operative dairy, had a separator and the butter commanded prices equally high. Yet the wife and the girls who had kept up this most profitable part of the farm were said by Professor Hoverstad to be among the finest women in the State. Mr. Curry himself spoke about the girls in a way that was




charming. "My oldest girl," he said, "graduated at Bishop Whipple's Academy as valedictorian, was sent a year to Wellesley, and is now back at St. Mary's as teacher. . . . It was not because she is an uncommonly smart girl, for she isn't, but because she had been accustomed all her life to take hold of things with energy and stick to them until they were accomplished. . . . All the teaching she had here was from her mother and me, and if you know anything about a farm you know that that was pretty irregular. Now we have two more daughters at St. Mary's. . . . They have just as little fear when a cow approaches them as when they are entertaining a bishop." To my deep regret, I was unable to accept Mr. Curry's invitation to stay for dinner, but as we drove away I was glad to see a pretty sixteen-year-old girl at the kitchen steps helping with the heaviest housework. It was as charming as the sight of the college girls, and educationally it was more wholesome. Here were girls who were being developed into the finest womanhood under an education that made them healthful, self-reliant, able and willing to serve in the common things of life. Not only sound bodies and minds, but sound hearts, come from teaching like this. These girls seemed to me types of the American women that are to be when all shall recognise that the best education is that which trains us to minister and not to be ministered unto.

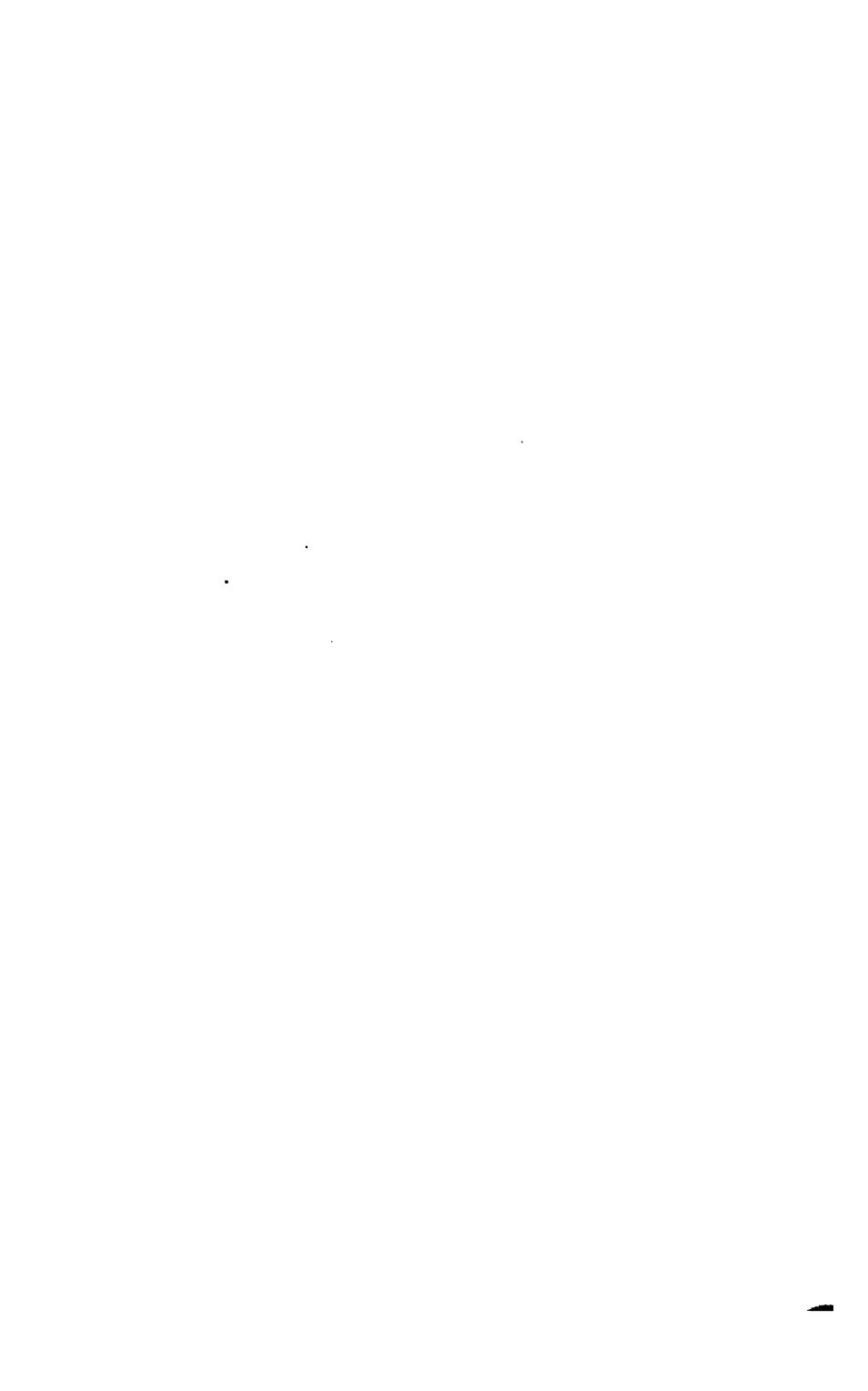
For women as well as men the northern farm gives the training in self-reliance and self-respect upon



which the development of democracy rests. Nowhere else have I found conditions so hopeful. There are hardships enough, due to the prevalence of debt, of low prices, of excessive railroad rates, and the like. But the forces that deeply affect the character of the people are in a wonderful degree working together for good. The great farm with a low grade of dependent labour is giving place to the small farm with a high grade of independent labour. The independent small farmer, by diversifying his crops, is avoiding the crises when hired labour must be called in, and the increased use of machinery, though less profitable than it is often thought, still further reduces the need of casual labour. More and more the farming population is becoming one of independent families who plan for themselves and are their own masters. Meanwhile the educational movement which has such astonishing strength in the Northwest is making the farmers an educated mass, and their own work—by reason of its diversity, by reason even of the machinery they are handling—is strengthening their ability to think and act for themselves. From the beginning the American farm has been the stronghold of the forces making for American freedom, and its position is to-day being further strengthened for the struggles of the future.











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